ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF THE BELLES-LETTRES.

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WITH

Reflections on PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS.

TRANSLATED from the FRENCH

By the late Mr. SLOPER FOREMAN.

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THE advantage and pleaſure reſulting from the ſtudy of the Belles Lettres, *are ſo obvious, and ſo univerſally acknowleged by all civilized nations, as to render any arguments in its favour, needleſs: But with regard to theſe* Elementary Principles *of the ingenious* M. Formey, *it may be neceſſary to obſerve, that they are admirably well calculated for conveying a perfect knowlege of the* Belles Lettres; *and that this work has the advantage over others on the ſame ſubject, inaſmuch as the examples, by way of illuſtration, are taken from the moſt celebrated* French *and* Latin *writers, (particularly the former) though at the ſame time honourable mention is made of the moſt valuable of thoſe of our own country. The beauties and defects of many of the* French *authors, which have been hitherto but little known to the generality of* Engliſh *readers, are, in the enſuing pages, diſplayed and im-*

partially conſidered; and the poetical, as well as proſe quotations, extracted from their works, are tranſlated into Engliſh: *ſo that every poſſible means are uſed, in this little* Tract, *to render the attainment of the* Belles Lettres *eaſy and delightful.*

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THE AUTHOR's INTROCUCTION.

Addreſſed to

Monſieur VERELST.

YOU have imagined, Sir, that you received ſome advantage from the diſcourſes we have regularly had together, on the ſubject of the Belles Lettres; *and ſenſible of the confidence you repoſe in me, I have done every thing in my power to give you the moſt diſtinct ideas of the principal matters compriſed in the extent of literature; and to conduct you to the pureſt ſources, from whence you may completely imbibe what the time allotted for our conferences did not permit me to communicate to you. I have no occaſion, Sir, to make a long elogium here, on the* Belles Lettres, *to animate you to the ſtudy of them. I have perceived with pleaſure that you greatly reliſh theſe ſciences, and that you very happily ſeize whatever they poſſeſs moſt worthy of attention; for a choice muſt be made, and nothing but the flower of things, if I may uſe the expreſſion, ſhould be taken. The art conſiſts in properly making this choice, not to ſuffer ourſelves to be dazzled by falſe beauties, and to diſtinguiſh the value of real ones. The accumulating too great a quantity of knowlege at random, over-*

loads the mind inſtead of adorning it: It is like a ſuperabundant repaſt, where the multitude of diſhes rather diſguſts than excites the appetite. But when we poſſeſs enlightened principles, and are initiated into a familiarity with good authors, we may paſs during the reſt of our lives many delicious moments in their company, and experience the truth of this fine paſſage of the prince of Roman *Eloquence: "These "ſtudies nouriſh youth, rejoice old age, embelliſh "proſperity, conſole and ſerve as an aſylum in ad- "verſity, afford us pleaſure when at home, embar- "raſs us not elſewhere; they paſs the night with "us, and abandon us not either in our travels, or "in the field*".*

I wiſh, Sir, that you may have the moſt happy and long experience of theſe advantages inſeparable from the Belles Lettres; *and that ſuſtaining with honour the illuſtrious name you bear, you may attain the higheſt offices in the reſpectable ſtate, of which you are a member. The* Belles Lettres, *and thoſe who cultivate them, will then, without doubt, find in you an enlightened friend, who will ſupport their intereſts with zeal, and voluntarily endeavour to procure for true merit, the rewards which are due to it. If I live long enough to be a witneſs thereof, I ſhall rejoice, and flatter myſelf with having contributed, in ſome meaſure, to inſpire you with this taſte, and of confirming you in theſe laudable diſpoſitions.*

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* The oration for the poet Archias.

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Elementary Principles OF THE BELLES-LETTRES.

I.

Of the BELLES-LETTRES *in general**.

THE *Belles-Lettres* may comprize human knowlege without exception, ſo far as the ſeveral branches of this knowlege are ſuſceptible of being preſented in an agreeable manner, and embelliſhed with ſuch ornaments, as reſpectively ſuit them. Though the *Worlds* of Mr. *de Fontenelle* are a work of philoſophy, and eſpecially of natural aſtronomy, they are nevertheleſs moſt pleaſantly written, and therefor belong to the *Belles-Lettres*.

2. Yet in order to be more accurate, we ſhall confine the *Belles-Lettres* to ſuch branches of knowlege, as are not, properly ſpeaking, ſciences, and require no rigorous demonſtrations, but on which the human mind may exerciſe itſelf freely, and as

* I premiſe once for all, that I ſhall extract from the tracts of the Abbé *Batteux*, and ſome other good authors, what ſuits my purpoſe; but as I chuſe to think rather than copy, what I borrow will not be conſiderable.

it were, divert itſelf, by preſenting them under various forms, yet ſo as to be ſubjected to ſome rules, and dependent on theory.

3. It is in the knowlege of theſe rules, and in the art of applying them, either to the works we read, or to thoſe we compoſe, that the ſtudy of the *Belles-Lettres* chiefly conſiſts.

II.

Of TASTE.

4. *Taſte* is the ſoul of all our ſtudies, and it would be a miſtake, if we thought it baniſhed from the dominions of the ſciences. The more they refine and elevate our intellects, the more our taſte muſt feel and gain by it. A man is not really learned, when the ſciences have deſtroyed or injured *Taſte*.

5. Taſte conſiſts *in diſcerning the different beauties, interſperſed in the works of nature and art, ſo far as this knowlege is accompanied with ſentiment.* This definition removes all the difficulties, and all the ambiguities, which abound in the diſcuſſions hitherto made on this quality of the ſoul, in confining it ſometimes to knowlege alone, ſometimes to ſentiment only.

6. The aſtoniſhing diverſity of *Taſtes* proceeds, and muſt neceſſarily proceed, from the unequal diſtribution of the two principles of *Taſte*, learning and ſentiment.

7. The capricious and tranſient *Taſtes* of the

multitude are not worth regarding: they are the effect of prejudice, paſſion, or the mode. When theſe cauſes ceaſe, their effects ceaſe alſo.

8. The *ſupreme taſte* of a finite Being ſhould conſiſt *in the higheſt degree of knowlege, joined to the moſt exquiſite ſenſe*: but as this junction does not exiſt in the ſame individual, the man, that comes neareſt to it, muſt be deemed to be poſſeſſed of the *beſt taſte*.

9. The *ſupreme taſte* of the infinite Being, *is the infinitely diſtinct knowlege of the beautiful, as well in general, as in all the determinations of which it is ſuſceptible, and which it receives in the ſyſtem of the univerſe* *.

III.

Of the BEAUTIFUL.

10. It is very difficult to attain to the primitive ideas of the *beautiful* in every kind of beauty, ſo as to digeſt them into order, eſpecially in diſtinguiſhing, on this matter, three things which are almoſt always confounded at the expence of truth, *viz.* the general notions of fine ſenſe, which give us the permanent rules of the *beautiful*; the natural judgment of the ſoul, where ſentiment is intermixed

* I take theſe definitions from a piece intitled, *An Analyſis of the Notion of Taſte*, which I have placed at the end of my edition of Father Andre's *Eſſay on the Beautiful*, publiſhed at Amſterdam, by Scheidner, 1759.

with ideas purely witty, but without deſtroying them; and the prejudices of education, or of cuſtom, which ſometimes ſeem to ſubvert both.

11 There is an *eſſential Beautiful*, independent of any inſtitution, which is the eternal rule of the viſible beauty of bodies. The ſlighteſt attention to our primitive ideas is ſufficient to convince us, that regularity, order, proportion and ſymmetry, are eſſentially preferable to irregularity, diſorder, and diſproportion.

12. There is *natural Beautiful*, dependent on the will of the Creator, but independent of our opinions and taſtes. The *eſſential Beautiful*, conſidered in the ſtructure of bodies, is, as one may ſay, nothing but the ground of the *natural Beautiful;* a ground rich and agreeable in itſelf, but which, with all its beauties, would be more pleaſing to reaſon, than to the eye, had not the author of nature taken care to ſet it off with colours, and to embelliſh it with an infinite variety of forms.

13. There is a third kind of the *Beautiful*, which we may call *arbitrary*, or *artificial*. Such is the *Beauty* of ſyſtem, or of manner, in the practice of the arts; the *Beauty* of mode, or of cuſtom, in dreſs; certain allurements of graces, even perſonal, which often have no other merit, than that of having, by chance, pleaſed that ſet of people who take the lead in the faſhionable world. But as there is much of the arbitrary, in thoſe ideas of beauty, we

muſt beware of concluding, that every thing *Beautiful*, is arbitrary.

14. The infinite diverſity of opinions and taſtes does not prove that there is no rule to judge of the *Beautiful*. This rule is the very diviſion of the three ſpecies of *Beauty* juſt indicated; and if we will go farther, one may yet diſtinguiſh ſeveral kinds of *arbitrary Beautiful*, viz. in genius, in taſte, and in pure caprice.

15. *Unity* conſtitutes the form and the eſſence of the *Beautiful*, in every kind of *Beauty**. But it muſt be ſeaſoned with *variety*, becauſe this eſſentially pleaſes the human mind, animates it, and prevents its growing drowzy†.

IV.

Of NATURE *and* ART.

16. Nature, being conſtant and invariable in her productions, always brings the ſame properties into the ſame ſpecies. The artiſt, on the contrary, who ſets himſelf to imitate nature, of which he has but a very imperfect knowlege, is at firſt embarraſſed about the choice of the objects, and the manner of combining them. His mind is limited in his views, and his power in the uſe of the means.

* *Omnis porro pulchritudinis forma unitas eſt.* S. Aug. Ep. 18. Edit. P. P. B. B.

† It is this principle of variety, reduced to uniformity, that Mr. *de Crouzas* has developed in his *Treatiſe of the Beautiful*, an eſteemed work.

17. The works of nature ſupport themſelves without alteration, juſt as they originally came forth from the hands of the Creator. On the contrary, in arts, the ſpecies often alter and degenerate: Sometimes the matter reſiſts the efforts of the artiſt, and ſometimes he wants the art of governing his matter.

18. Each ſubject gives to itſelf a particular form and nature; each work conſtitutes a ſeparate ſpecies; and ſometimes between two ſpecies comprized under the ſame genus, there is nothing common to them but the name. Such is the caſe with poetry. We thus call an epic poem, and an epigram: a tragedy, and a ſong. What other compariſon is there between theſe ſpecies of poetry, than that of being in verſe?

19. Of all the arts of imitation, that which leaſt deviates, is painting; becauſe it has a preciſe object, which is viſible nature, and a preciſe manner of repreſenting it, which is the drawing and the colouring. On the contrary, in poetry and muſic, where we are in purſuit of an idea that flies before us, running after a ſound which we have but barely ſuppoſed, it is a kind of prodigy, that art alone ſhould be capable of producing a certain ſeries of thoughts, that lead to the formation of a natural whole.

20. One of the greateſt perfections of nature lying in the uniformity of each ſpecies, it is eſſential that the arts ſhould imitate it in this part; ſo that

with them, each thing be what it ought to be, and that it be ſo in an evident manner, aſcertained by an eſſential difference that immediately ſtrikes the mind: otherwiſe we fall into the inconvenience of vague ideas, which nothing can bring to a termination, nor ſeparate from other objects*,

V.

Of POETRY.

21. Poetry is the art of bringing under the yoke of meaſure, or of rhime, ideas fit to paint certain objects, and to move the heart. The different ſpecies of poeſy may be reduced to four kinds; the *narrative*, *the dramatic*, the *lyric*, and the *didactic*.

22. Each kind of poetry is eſſentially characterized, either by the quality of the actors, or the nature of the ſubject, or the very effect which the work produces. However, it is the effect that attracts every thing to itſelf; it is the center, the deſign, and the term of the piece.

23. In diſtinguiſhing the different ſorts of paſſions that may be wrought upon, we find the ſeveral ſpecies of poeſy. The epic poem creates admiration; tragedy forces tears from us; comedy makes us laugh; and paſtorals produce gentle and calm ſenſations. It it the ſame with all the other kinds.

* *Vanæ finguntur ſpecies.* HORACE.

Every reader expects to receive from them an impreſſion of ſuch or ſuch a kind; and if the work does not convey it to him, or conveys it but imperfectly, in a confuſed, equivocal manner, he has a right to be diſguſted.

24. It is nature that forms poets, but it is art that brings them to a certain degree of perfection.

VI.

Of the EPOPEA.

25. The term *Epopea*, taken in its full extent, denotes a poetic recital, whatever the ſubject of it may be: but cuſtom has decided that this name, or that of *epic poem*, ſhould be given only to a poetic recital of ſome great action, in which whole nations, or even all mankind, are intereſted.

26. *Epopea* differs from hiſtory, as fiction does from truth. Hiſtory ſets down facts, juſt as they are, without altering or embelliſhing them: *Epopea* invents every thing that it may ſtand in need of, and knows no other bounds than poſſibility.

27. It is expected from an *epic poem*, that it ſhould charm the reader, excite his admiration, employ at once his reaſon, judgment, and wit: touch the heart, and make the ſoul feel a ſeries of delightful ſituations, which muſt be interrupted a few moments, but only in order to be renewed with the more vivacity.

28. The epic poet is ſuppoſed to be endowed

with the privilege of inſpiration. The verſes are dictated to him by a muſe, a celeſtial Being, who is not only well acquainted with the ſpring of all the natural cauſes, but alſo knows the action of the ſupernatural cauſes.

29. In defining *Epopea* to be *a poetic recital of a marvellous action*, we ſee in theſe few words, how this kind of work differs from romances, which go beyond the probable; from hiſtory, which does not go ſo far as the marvellous; from the drama, which is not a recital; and from other little poems, whoſe ſubjects have nothing noble nor heroic.

30. The matter of the *epic poem* is an action, that is to ſay, an enterprize made with choice and deſign.

31. The firſt quality of the epic action, is *unity*. Two actions going on together, hand in hand, would deſtroy our intereſt therein, by dividing it.

32. The whole life of a hero cannot be the ſubject of a regular poem; becauſe, 1. it is a too extenſive whole to be taken in at one view; 2. every thing in the life of a hero is not heroical; and, 3. the facts are not neceſſarily linked with one another, to attain an end that may comprize them all as means thereto.

33. There is then *unity* in action, when it is independent of all other actions, and all its parts are naturally linked together.

34. Here a queſtion ariſes; What is it that makes this independence, and this interior unity of parts?

Is it the unity of the moral maxim reſulting from the poem? Is it the unity of enterprize, that of a hero, or the excellence of ſome one amongſt thoſe whom this title fits? All this is liable to inconveniences; therefor we muſt ſeek for the unity of action, only in the propoſal of the ſubject. This propoſal announces the end of the poet; it ſhews the beginning of the action, and fixes its termination.

35. As there does not really exiſt an action quite detached from the total maſs of human cauſes and actions, it reſts on the poet to make a *whole* of the part he chuſes, and to terminate it in every ſenſe, by ſeparating it from every thing that is relative thereto. Thus *Homer* ſays, *I will ſing the wrath of Achilles:* it was at his option to ſay, *I will ſing the taking of Troy.*

36. We muſt not confound the unity of ſubject, with the unity of action. A ſubject may be *one*, and yet contain an infinite number of actions; ſuch as the entire Roman Hiſtory would be, if it were turned into a poem.

37. The unity of action does not exclude the uſe of *Epiſodes*. We thus denominate certain little actions, ſubordinate to the principal action, in order to unbend the reader's mind by this variety. Theſe ſcraps might be omitted, and yet the poem, in which they are found would ſtill be an epic poem.

38. *Epiſodes*, in the beginning, were recitals interſperſed in the lyric ſongs, compoſed in honour of the gods. In proceſs of time, the epiſodic reci-

tal became the principal ſubject, and the ſong became epiſodic.

39. In the epic poem, and where-ever an *epiſode* is found, it is a part ſubſervient to the principal action, but which might be left out, without hinderance to the winding up of the bottom. Yet it muſt, 1. be brought in by circumſtances; 2. it muſt be conciſe, becauſe it is only a relaxation given, by the way, to the mind; 3. it muſt offer objects different from thoſe that precede and follow it, ſince it is made uſe of only for the ſake of variety; and, 4. it muſt be in the general ſtrain of the work in which it is inſerted,

40. The epic action muſt be complete: that is, it muſt neceſſarily conſiſt of a beginning, a middle, and an end. In a poem, no author would ſet before us an action begun, or leave it unfiniſhed.

41 The intereſting part is eſſential in an epic poem, and it may be two-fold; the one reſpecting the nature of the action and object; the other depending on the obſtacles to be ſurmounted. The firſt moves us, and is the pathetic part; the ſecond excites our curioſity, and may be called the marvellous.

42. What affects us, includes ſeveral ſort of intereſt or concern. National intereſt: A Roman intereſts himſelf in the enterprize of *Æneas*, becauſe he is a Roman. Religious intereſt: A chriſtian intereſts himſelf in the enterprize of *Godfrey*, who goes to recover the ſepulchre of Jeſus Chriſt. The

intereſt of nature or humanity: Every man is concerned at the misfortunes of another man. The Iliad and the Odyſſey comprize theſe three intereſts with regard to the Greeks, as the Æneid does with reſpect to the Romans. In our days there is nothing remains for us but the intereſt of humanity.

43. The *Epopea* chiefly intereſts us by the admiration ariſing from the heroic and marvellous objects it preſents. But as it is the parent and the ſource of all the other kinds, it muſt include all the intereſting parts of them. To be an epic poet, one muſt be every thing, and that in an eminent degree.

44. The intereſt that ariſes from obſtacles, forms what we call the *plots* and the *unravelling*. The obſtacles preſented, are called *plots*; and the manner in which the hero ſurmounts them, is the *unravelling*. The reader takes part with the hero, and ſhares with him all the ſituations through which he paſſes.

45. Every poetic action muſt have a *plot*, otherwiſe it cannot be intereſting. It is difficulty that irritates noble paſſions, and ſets great virtues to work.

46. In the epic action there is a *principal plot*, and *ſubordinate plots*. The principal muſt have unity; the number of the others is regulated according to neceſſity and probability.

47. The *plots* proceed either from the ignorance, or the weakneſs of the acting perſon. The firſt

kind are ſolved by the knowlege of what was unknown; the ſecond by deſtroying an oppoſing force, through a ſuperiority of ſtrength or art. The firſt kind of *unravelling*, is called unravelling by diſcovery; the ſecond by *peripatie*, or a ſudden turn of fortune.

48. The plot may be in the very action, when the enterprize is difficult in itſelf, or in ſome outward obſtacle. It is better placed in the action: The more intricate it is, *i. e.* the more difficult to unravel, the more perfect it is.

49. The plots and the unravellings are, properly ſpeaking, the true characteriſtics of every ſpecies of poetry. The plots contain the efforts of the acting cauſe: the unravelling contains the effect produced, or wanted, by that cauſe.

50. In the epopea, the gods are actors in all the parts; and from one end to the other we ſee ſupernatural beings concerned in the events. Hence ariſes the marvellous which is deemed eſſential to the epic-poem, and to which it owes its luſtre and ſucceſs: for all men delight in the marvellous; and this taſte, which diſcovers itſelf ſo ſtrongly in our infancy, only changes objects in more advanced ages.

51. Thoſe men, who lived neareſt to the origin of the world, reſembled children, through the imperfection of their knowlege, and conſequently were ſtill more eager for the marvellous than thoſe of our days. This made them greatly reliſh the mix-

ture of the action of the gods, with thoſe of men; which ſerved, 1. To give an *eclat* to heroes, and render the narration more intereſting; 2. To confirm the readers or the audience in the idea they had, that there were gods among them, to aſſiſt or puniſh them according to their merits. Such is the primitive ſource of the marvellous in the epopea.

52. In examining attentively the poems of Homer and Virgil, we ſee their plan conſiſts in conſtituting the gods the grand actors of the epopea, who appear but at certain diſtances, and in making men the ſubaltern actors, who almoſt always have a part in the ſcene.

53. Is it eſſential that the epic poem be marvellous in this way, *i. e.* that it ſhould always employ the intervention of ſupernatural cauſes? To anſwer this queſtion, we muſt remember the object of this kind of poetry: all agree that it is to excite admiration. Now, what means are more natural and more certain to creat it, than to employ the marvellous, by ſhewing the action of a Deity upon man, and by what ſecret force it governs him? Beſides, this ſyſtem has nothing in it but what is noble; nothing can be finer, greater, more ſuitable to a genius almoſt divine, than to repreſent the whole univerſe as moving under the eye and by the hand of a Supreme Being.

54. Chriſtianity may countenance this kind of poetry, without prejudicing the reſpect due to religion.

55. If we ſeriouſly introduce a reſpected divinity, decency requires us to give it an object worthy of it, according to our ideas, and to aſſociate it with actors of elevation and dignity. But if the ſubject has but little of the ſerious, ſuch as the *Secchia Rapita* and the *Lutrin*, then one may employ the comic miniſtry of ſome Pagan divinity, or ſome allegoric genius, which, veſted with a ſuppoſititious power, may ſupply the place of ſupernatural machinery.

56. In this manner we may diſtinguiſh two ſorts of the epopea, and both of them marvellous, the one heroic, and the other comic; but the name of the genus will remain, by way of excellence, to the heroic epopea.

57. There are two ſorts of divinities, the one real, as Jupiter, Neptune, etc, the other allegorical, as Diſcord, Peace, etc. We cannot give the latter a cloſe or continued part to act, becauſe they are, in the main, but a figure of rhetoric. But the real divinities act occaſionally mixt parts, *i. e.* ſometimes real, ſometimes allegorical; and then the allegory muſt have a literal ſenſe, apparent enough to be diſcovered as ſuch, and taken literally.

58. There muſt be no miracle in an epic poem; nothing but the marvellous in it: and if this marvellous is ſenſible and reaſonable, it is confined to removing the veil that covers the ſecret ſprings of nature, and repreſenting the conduct of the God,

with reſpect to human things. *Nothing is beautiful but truth.*

59. It is however better to indulge ſome flights, than to be always in a congealed regularity. The vigorous character that goes beyond the mark, is preferred to that which dares not attain it.

60. The miniſtry of divinities ought not to extend to trifling details. In attempting to ennoble the thing, we abaſe the God.

61. The marvellous of the epopea, which conſiſts in unvailing the ſupernatural ſprings of a great action, may and ought to be reconcileable with probability, which conſiſts in exhibiting thoſe ſprings, juſt as they are, in the opinion of thoſe for whom we write.

62. The action of the epopea is not neceſſarily allegorical, as is pretended by Father Le Boſſu, in his treatiſe upon Epic Poetry, which, however, is a very judicious work. According to his opinion, the action of the epopea is ſolely intended to invelope and teach a moral truth, which muſt be choſen previous to the compoſition of the poem. All that can be granted this author is, that a maxim of morality may reſult from the epic action, as it would in general reſult from any human action whatever. There is not a paſſage in hiſtory, but what has its ſeed of inſtruction envelloped.

63. If it be aſked, Why then is fiction uſed in the epopea? We anſwer, it is in order to propoſe examples of ſuch a perfection, as are not to be

found in the real examples of ſociety, or of hiſtory; it is to ſhew in the ſprings of an action, arranged for this purpoſe, the principles of the religion, the ſociety, and the government, of thoſe for whom the poem is made; it is to deſcribe the manners and cuſtoms of nations in peace and war; in fine, it is to convey a perfect knowlege of man, his paſſions, his vices, his virtues, his ſtrength, and his weakneſſes. It is for this we invent in the epopea, as hiſtory does not afford any action that can comprize ſo many objects. Poetry paints theſe objects in a grand ſtile, puts energy and life into them.

64. The number of the actors in the *epopea*, and the qualities that ſuit them, is determined by the neceſſity of the action, and by probability. We muſt employ therein neither more, nor leſs, nor any others, than thoſe wanted, in order to make the principal perſonage attain his end.

65. The action of the *epopea* is the act of one man, or of ſeveral, or even of a whole people. In general, every work in which we ſee the action of a particular man, will concern us more than if it contained the action of a nation; becauſe the reader, being an individual, brings all home to himſelf.

66. The qualities of the actors conſiſt in the character and the manners given them. The manners are commonly founded on the character, and the character is contained in the manners. If we would more exactly diſtinguiſh theſe two things, *character* may be conſidered as a natural diſpoſition, which

makes a man act rather one way than another; and by *manners* may be underſtood, a diſpoſition acquired by a repetition of acts, whether induced thereto by nature or education, by example or reaſon.

67. The order of principles and effects, in the natural conduct of man, may be expreſſed thus: the character determines the manners; manners, joined to the character, determine the will at the preſence of the object; the will being determined, produces the exterior and ſenſible act.

68. This character, theſe manners, this interior will, can be known only by actions and diſcourſes, which are the images of the ſoul, whether in its habitudes or in its actual ſentiments. Therefor, there are morals in a poem, whatever it may be, when the very diſcourſe of the ſpeaker, or the action of the agent, ſenſibly bears the ſtamp of his character, of his ſentiments, and of his actual diſpoſition.

69. The poetic rectitude of the manners conſiſts in the conformity of the actions, and diſcourſes of an actor, with the opinion we have conceived of him. Thus Nero muſt be cruel, Tiberius diſtruſtful, etc.

70. The heroes of poetry muſt be above ordinary men; but all perfections muſt not be united in a ſingle one: for then he becomes a prodigy, and is no longer intereſting. The character of Æneas falls into this inconvenience, which is not met with in the hero of the Iliad.

71. When a character is entirely new, *i. e.* when ſome perſonage is introduced who is not known, either in fable or hiſtory, we muſt begin by exactly determining this character, and keep up to it in the ſequel.

72. In general, the manners muſt be ſupported; and it is not allowable to act againſt this rule, except when we intend to paint inconſtancy, or caprice.

73. Manners, variegated in the different perſonages, mutually ſet off and give luſtre to one another. They may be varied three ways; 1. In the ſpecies, and only by the difference of degrees; 2. By the addition of another quality, which, without being predominant, alters the ſpecies; and, 3. By the very difference of the ſpecies.

74. It is a defect of genius, and of reſource in the artiſt, to draw himſelf, in words, the portrait of him whoſe manners he would paint. It is by the actions and the diſcourſes, that characters muſt be eſtabliſhed.

75. To examine now the form of the *epopea;* we firſt find therein the *propoſition* of the ſubject, which determines the unity of action, and then the *invocation* of a divinity, who reveals to the poet the ſupernatural cauſes of the event he is going to relate. The propoſition muſt be ſimple, clear, and without oſtentation. The invocation may be in a very elevated ſtile.

76. The *things* in the epopea are the action, and

all its parts, great and little, eſſential and integral, thoſe of neceſſity, and thoſe of ornament. Genius produces and arranges them.

77. The fountain, from whence genius is ſupplied, is nature, by which is meant, 1. All that is actually exiſting in the univerſe; 2. All that has exiſted before our days, and which we may know from the hiſtory of times, places, and men; 3. Every thing that may exiſt, but which perhaps never did, nor ever will exiſt. This makes, as it were, three worlds; the real, the hiſtorical, (which includes the fabulous,) and the poſſible world.

78. A ſkillful poet ſhould rather take his materials where they are, *i. e.* in the very things that exiſt, in the hiſtory of paſt ages, in the ideas and opinions of men, than to make too free with the right of inventing and creating.

79. Therefor the true function of genius is not to create. It is, in the firſt place, to form a plan; ſecondly, to ſeek and find materials to complete it; laſtly, to know how to ſuit thoſe materials, which nature furniſhes him with, to the artificial plan he has formed. Herein conſiſts the great ſuperiority of Homer and Virgil.

80. The art of poets, in the narration, conſiſts in ruſhing at once into the midſt of the events, as if the reader were informed of what has preceded them, eſpecially when the enterprize is of long duration. The recital is begun very cloſe to the action, and means are found to defer ſhewing the

cauſes till ſome favourable opportunity, which the poet contrives.

81. A particular art, with reſpect to the very form of the epic ſtile, is to give a dramatic turn to moſt of the narrations. This induces us to obſerve, that there are three different forms which poetry may aſſume, in its manner of reciting. In the firſt, the poet does not appear; we ſee none but thoſe whom he puts in action. In the ſecond, the poet ſhews himſelf, and does not make his actors appear. The third is mixed; *i. e.* that, without bringing the actors in view, their ſpeeches are cited, by putting them into their mouth, as proceeding from them, which forms a ſpecies of the drama. Hiſtory itſelf has a right to throw this dramatic turn into ſome places, in order to pleaſe by variety; with much more reaſon is it done in epic poetry, which uſes, without ſcruple, all the means of pleaſing.

82. The poetic ſtile requires an uncommon art: we muſt duly feel *the power of a word rightly placed*. The models given by Boileau, in this reſpect, are incomparable. We therein find, 1. True, juſt, natural thoughts, and theſe introduced in the moſt happy manner; 2. Words admirably choſen to convey his meaning; 3. Turns of a ſingular force and ſimplicity; 4. A deſcription of details, which, in ſhewing the parts of certain objects, ſeem to multiply thoſe very objects; 5. A natural harmony, which conſiſts in the choice of certain ſounds, and in their combinations, agreeably to the nature of

the object expreſſed; 6. The number or diſtribution of the pauſes, according to the wants of the mind, the reſpiration, and the ear; in fine, 7. The artificial harmony of the verſification, which has rules dependent on taſte, and others upon art.

83. The rules of taſte, with regard to artificial harmony, determine the choice of ſounds; and that is according to the language in which the poet writes. The rules of art conſiſt in chuſing the kind of verſe intended to be uſed. Each ſpecies of poetry has its peculiar verſification: that of the *epopea* is heroic, which, in Greek, Latin, and French, is of twelve feet, with a pauſe about the middle, and a final of a ſenſible cadence.

84. The verſe requires to be elevated by the very ſtile to which it is the meaſure: and there are three ſorts of ſtile; the ſimple, the medium, and the ſublime. Theſe three ſpecies have degrees in each, which it is difficult to fix; but our ideas in this kind, as in ſeveral, may reſt on the models given us by great authors. Homer and Pindar, among the Greeks, Virgil and Horace, among the Latins, the tragedies of Corneille, and the odes of Rouſſeau, would ſerve as limits here, had we not the inſpired books, ſuch as Job, the Pſalms, and the Prophets.

85. The dignity of the actors determines the degree of riſing in the epopea. The muſe that ſpeaks in it, is obliged to borrow the ſpeech of men, but ſhe makes uſe of all the means fit to heighten it.

VI.

Of EPIC POETS.

86. Homer is the father of epic poetry; and, according to the moſt general opinion, he is alſo ſuperior to all that have ſucceeded him. He probably lived 850 years before the Chriſtian æra, and might have ſeen, in his infancy, ſome old men who had been eye-witneſſes of the ſiege of Troy. However, we are quite ignorant concerning his perſon; and it was not 'till long after his death, that ſeven potent cities diſputed with each other the honour of his birth.

87. The partizans of Homer have ſpoken of him rather like paſſionate lovers, than as diſcreet friends. Loving him with a kind of phrenzy, they wink at his faults, and will ſee nothing but his beauties. But this poet has had enemies not leſs ardent, who were obſtinately bent on finding in him nothing but faults.

88. The Iliad, which is Homer's grand work, is replete with gods and improbable combats. Theſe ſubjects are naturally pleaſing to men, becauſe they like every thing that appears terrible.

89. Homer is reproached principally with the extravagance of his gods, and the roughneſs of his heroes. But this is like cenſuring a painter, for having drawn his figures in the habiliments of his

time. Homer deſcribed the gods ſuch as they were believed to be, and men ſuch as they were.

90. There has been a great diſpute in France about Homer The quarrel began by the *Parallel of the ancients and moderns*, publiſhed by Mr. Perrault. Though this work is very far from being deſpicable, Deſpreaux wrote againſt it with ſo much energy, that he ſeemed to have gained a complete victory. La Motte entered the liſts againſt Homer, and had Madam Dacier to encounter. Few works are written with ſo much art, diſcretion and delicacy, as Mr. La Motte's diſſertations on Homer. Madam Dacier, whoſe erudition would have been admired in a man, maintained Homer's cauſe with all the heat of a commentator. One of the works wherein the queſtions concerning Homer are beſt diſcuſſed, is that of the Abbé Terraſſon.

91. Homer has diſplayed genius in invention; taſte and art in diſpoſition; ſtrength and accuracy in expreſſion.

92. The Greeks were beſieging Troy; Agamemnon, general of the army, quarrelled with Achilles, who was the moſt valiant hero engaged in it: upon which the latter immediately withdrew from the camp; and the Greks were beaten, 'till the diſguſted hero, brought to a better temper by an accident which affected himſelf, changed the fortune of war. This is the whole ſubject of the Iliad, and the foundation on which the edifice of the poem is raiſed.

93. The ſubject of the Odiſſey is the return of Ulyſſes to Ithaca, a little iſland of which he was king. This hero had not the advantage of being a demi-god by birth, like Achilles, who was the ſon of Thetis; but he had the merit of one, *i. e* he was poſſeſſed of more than human fortitude of ſoul, with infinite prudence. The protection of Minerva, joined to theſe great qualities, rendered him as admirable as Achilles.

94. The Iliad is chiefly deſigned to affect, to aſtoniſh, to work upon the paſſions. The Odyſſey is more calculated to inſtruct by its allegorical narrations, its imagery, and its maxims. In both poems, we find the ſame theology, the ſame arrangement of celeſtial with terreſtrial cauſes.

95. The chief merit of Homer conſiſts in having ſtruck out a road for himſelf, in which nobody had travelled before him. He runs without a guide, without art, without rule: he deviates in his career; but he far our-ſtrips every thing that is only mere reaſon and correctneſs. He created his art, and left it imperfect; it is ſtill a chaos, but light ſhines therein on every ſide.

96. Whoever has read Madam Dacier only, has not read Homer. Tranſlations encreaſe the faults of a work, eſpecially of a poem, and mar its beauties. It is in the Greek only we can ſee through the negligencies of the poet, the beauty of his ſtile, the energy and richneſs of his elocution, and the

natural harmony of the fineſt language that ever was ſpoken by men.

97. Virgil availed himſelf of all the advantages of the æra he lived in. It was the fine age of Auguſtus, which abounded with men of letters, with philoſophers who had read the ancient and modern authors; who had compared and diſcuſſed them, and were daily canvaſſing their beauties, in converſation and in writing. Accordingly, we ſee, in every thing he has written, the care of an author acquainted with rules, who fears to offend them, who poliſhes and re-poliſhes without end, and apprehends the cenſure of connoiſſeurs. Always rich, always correct, always elegant, the colours of his portraits are as brilliant as they are exact.

98. Of all the monuments of antiquity remaining, the Æneid is the fineſt. Virgil derived the ſubject of his poem from the fabulous traditions concerning the arrival and ſettlement of Æneas in Italy, which ſuperſtition had handed down to his time; much in the ſame manner as Homer founded his Iliad, on the traditions of the ſiege of Troy. The ſubject could not be more happily choſen. Bordering on the fabulous times, almoſt fabulous itſelf, men had but vague ideas of it, and were thereby capable of lending attention to epic fictions: Beſides this, there was an intereſting relation between this ſubject, and the people for whom the author undertook to treat of it. The Romans pretended that Æneas was the

founder of their nation, and the father of their firſt king.

99. Virgil could not avoid bringing into the ſcene the gods of Homer, who were alſo his own, and who, according to tradition, had themſelves conducted Æneas into Italy. But ſome * pretend, he makes them act with more judgment than the Grecian poet; whilſt others † are of opinion, that the miniſtry of the gods, full of fire and energy in Homer, is frigid in Virgil, who knows not how, like his model, to make it agree every-where, and reconcile it with the human agents.

100. The ſagacity of Virgil borders upon timidity; he rather chuſes to keep near ſhore, than to expoſe himſelf to a ſtorm. Yet this does not prevent his being great; and he is more ſo, when he gives ſcope to his own genius, than when he ſtoops to imitation.

101. The ſix firſt books of the Æneid are extremely beautiful. Virgil exhauſts all the powers of imagination, in the deſcent of Æneas to the regions of Pluto; he ſays every thing that can affect the heart, in the amours of Dido: he excites terror and compaſſion in the higheſt degree, in his deſcription of the ruin of Troy. But, arriving at the middle of his flight, he is obliged to deſcend from that elevation; and the moſt univerſal objection againſt his poem is, that the ſix laſt cantos are un-

* Mr. de Voltaire.
† The Abbé Batteux.

worthy of the ſix firſt. However, we muſt not think them void of beauties: In every place we diſcern a great maſter; and what the ſtrength of his art has drawn from that ungrateful ſoil, is almoſt incredible. What offends moſt in this half of the Æneid, is, that we are tempted in reading it, to take part with Turnus againſt Æneas.

102. Lucan, deſcended from an ancient houſe of the Equeſtrian Order, was born at Cordoua in Spain, in the reign of Caligula, and having been brought to Rome at the age of eight months, he was educated in the houſe of his uncle Seneca. He was a favourite of Nero, 'till he was imprudent enough to diſpute with him the prize of poetry, and the dangerous honour of winning it. Loſing his favour by this means, Lucan engaged in a conſpiracy, the diſcovery of which coſt him his life.

103. The poem he compoſed, turned upon a recent hiſtory; a taſk which Varius had already ſucceſsfully executed before him. The perſonages of the Pharſalia are much greater than thoſe of the Æneid; but Lucan not daring to deviate from hiſtory, thereby made his poem dry and barren. In endeavouring to ſupply the want of invention by grandeur of ſentiment, he has often concealed ſterility under bombaſt.

104. In Lucan there is no brilliant deſcription, as in Homer. He had not, like Virgil, the art of narration, and of ſaying nothing beyond the purpoſe; he has neither his elegance nor his harmony.

Yet ſtill we find beauties in the Pharſalia, which are not to be met with in the Iliad nor in the Æneid. In the midſt of inflated declamations, there are bold and maſculine thoughts, and ſome of thoſe political maxims with which Corneille abounds: Some of his diſcourſes have the majeſty of thoſe of Livy, and the energy of Tacitus. He paints like Salluſt: in ſhort, he is great in every place where he does not aim at being a poet.

105. The barbarian conquerors, who deſtroyed the Roman empire, ſpread their barbariſm and ignorance all over the weſt. It was not 'till eight hundred years after, that arts began to revive: but, then, they revived in the form of Goths and Vandals. Poetry was the firſt art they cultivated with ſucceſs; witneſs the works of Dante and Petrarch.

106. Triſſin, author of the famous *Sophonisba*, the firſt tragedy written in the vernacular language, attempted an epic poem. He took for his ſubject, Italy delivered from the Goths by Beliſarius, under the reign of Juſtinian. His plan is ſagacious and regular, but the poetic ſtile is weak. Nevertheleſs, the work ſucceeded; and notwithſtanding the far ſuperior poems that have ſince appeared, Triſſin retains the glory of having been the firſt modern in Europe, that compoſed a regular and ſenſible epic poem, though languid, and who dared to ſhake off the yoke of rhyme.

107. At the ſame time Camoens, in Portugal,

was opening a quite new road, and acquiring a reputation which ſtill ſubſiſts amongſt his countrymen, who ſtile him the Portugueze Virgil. The life of this poet was much chequered, and he died in poverty. His poem, intitled the *Luſiad*, is an epope?, of a new kind; the ſubject is countries, till then unknown, diſcovered by the help of navigation. The ſimplicity of the poem is heightened by fictions, as novel as the ſubject: ſome of them are happily imagined, but in moſt the marvellous is abſurd. However, the work muſt needs abound with great beauties, ſince for two hundred years paſt, it is the delight of an ingenious nation, whom we muſt ſuppoſe to be competent judges of its defects.

108. We do not rank Arioſto among the epic poets, for this title cannot ſuit him, 'till we couple Don Quixote with the Æneid, and Calot with Correggio.

109. Taſſo, on the contrary, is worthy of one of the moſt honourable places. He was the offſpring of one of the moſt illuſtrious families in Italy, and at the age of thirty years, he publiſhed his *Jeruſalem delivered*, which, it ſhould ſeem, might have covered him with glory to the end of his life. Nevertheleſs, the reſt of his career was nothing but a ſeries of calamities and humiliations. When at the end of twenty years, honours and a fortune were offered to him, his mind, worn out with ſo long a train of misfortunes, was become inſenſible to every thing that might have delighted him.

110. The *Jeruſalem*, in ſome reſpects, ſeems to be formed upon the *Iliad;* but Taſſo went far beyond his model. He has painted what Homer pencil'd; he has perfected the art of colouring, and of diſtinguiſhing the different kinds of virtues, vices, and paſſions, which in another point of view ſeem to be the ſame. But, though this work abounds with beauties univerſally admired, yet there are many paſſages which are reliſhed only in Italy, and ſome that ought not to pleaſe any nation. The author frequently falls into quibbles and puerile conceits: but theſe weakneſſes were a kind of tribute, which his genius paid to the taſte of his time for puns.

111. About the end of the 16th century, Spain produced an epic poem, celebrated for ſome peculiar beauties, as well as by the ſingularity of the ſubject, but ſtill more remarkable from the character of the author. His name was Don Alonzo d'Ercilla y Cuniga: he commanded ſome troops in Chily, where he waged war in a little mountainous country, called Araucana, inhabited by a race of men more robuſt and ferocious than all the other American nations. In this war he went through extreme dangers, and performed the moſt aſtoniſhing actions: this occaſioned him to conceive the deſign of immortalizing himſelf, in immortalizing his enemies. He was both a conqueror and a poet, and intitled his poem *Araucana*, from the name of the country. He has introduced much fire in the battles; but,

as to the reſt, there is no invention, no plan, no variety in the deſcriptions, no unity in the deſign. This poem is more wild, than the nations who are the ſubject of it.

112. Milton, whom the Engliſh now eſteem as a divine poet, was ſecretary to Oliver Cromwell, and made his pen ſubſervient to the juſtifying the death of CHARLES I. Being included in the amneſty granted by CHARLES II. he began his epic poem at the age of fifty-two, and loſt his ſight when he had ſcarce ſet about it. He ſpent nine years in compoſing his *Paradiſe Loſt*, with great difficulty found a bookſeller that would venture upon it, and died without being ſenſible of the reputation this work would one day procure him.

113. Some learned Engliſhmen, and particularly the celebrated Addiſon, having reliſhed this poem, pretended that it was equal to thoſe of Virgil and Homer: they wrote to prove this aſſertion; the Engliſh perſuaded themſelves it was ſo, and Milton's reputation was fixed. Mr. Dupré de Saint Maur gave a very fine tranſlation of it, which made it known in France.

114. It is aſtoniſhing to find in a ſubject, ſo ſeemingly barren as that of *Paradiſe Loſt*, ſo great a fertility of imagination. We admire the majeſtic ſtrokes with which Milton dares to deſcribe God; and the brilliant character he draws of the Devil. We read with pleaſure the deſcription of the garden of Eden, and the innocent amours of Adam and

Eve. But in extolling divers ſublime flights, judicious critics agree in opinion, that ſeveral are overſtrained, and rendered puerile only by the author's labouring to make them great.

115. Europe, for a long time, thought the French incapable of the epopea: this judgment being formed from the poems of Chapelain, Le Moine, Deſmarets, Caſſaign, and Scuderi. Mr. de Voltaire has had the glory of giving his country a poem equal to the fineſt of any age and nation.

116. The Henriad appeared for the firſt time in 1723, under the Title of *The League*. The London quarto edition, in 1726, altered the title to that which it has ever ſince retained in a multitude of ſubſequent editions. The *Henriad* has alſo been tranſlated into divers languages; and as it has been generally approved, in a century which may be called the age of taſte, it will probably be reliſhed in future ages.

117. The *Henriad* may be put in the ſcale with the *Æneid*. We need but compare the plan, the manners, the marvellous of theſe two poems, the ſimilitude of perſonages, the correſponding epiſodes, and the taſte of both poets in the choice of theſe epiſodes; the art with which they have combined the facts; their compariſons, their deſcriptions, and their taſte in general.

118. The ſubject of the *Henriad* is very well choſen; it is peculiarly intereſting to the French, on account of its hero, who is the greateſt monarch

they ever had, and by the extraordinary events it recites. The plan is very artfully laid, and the beauties of deſcription are incomparable.

VIII.

Of SPECTACLES, *or* SHEWS.

119. Mankind neceſſarily require to have ſhews of ſome ſort or other: hence has ariſen the great number of them eſtabliſhed in almoſt all nations. When nature in its effects, or ſociety in its occurrencies, does not afford ſufficient occupation to men, they are under great obligation to thoſe who have talents to create phantoms and reſemblances without reality.

120. The grimaces of the quack, mounted on treſtles, may amuſe the ignorant vulgar; but it was natural, and as it were neceſſary, that exhibitions depending on art, ſhould be in time brought to perfection among poliſhed ſocieties.

121. Man himſelf is of all objects, that which moſt concerns mankind. When we ſee repreſented in another perſon, what we are ourſelves, nothing is more proper to fix our attention, and ſtrongly work upon the mind.

122. Man being a compoſition of body and ſoul, there are two ſorts of repreſentations in which he is intereſted. Nations, that have cultivated the body more than the mind, have preferred ſhews which diſplayed ſtrength of body and flexibility of limbs.

Thoſe, that have cultivated the mind more than the body, have preferred ſuch ſpectacles as exhibit the reſources of genius, and the ſprings of the paſſions. There are ſome who have equally cultivated both kinds of repreſentations, and honoured them alike.

123. Thoſe ſpectacles, in which we ſee ſtrength and ſuppleneſs of body, ſcarce require any art, the action being free, ſerious, and real. On the contrary, thoſe that put the ſoul in action require a vaſt deal of art, becauſe the whole is fiction, and the intention is to make it paſs for truth.

124. Corporal repreſentations muſt needs make a livelier and ſtronger impreſſion: the ſhocks they give to the mind, render it firm, callous, and ſometimes cruel. On the contrary, mental ſhews make a gentler impreſſion, calculated to humanize and melt the heart, rather than harden it.

IX.

Of the DRAMA *in general.*

125. *Dramatic Poetry* is ſo called from a Greek word, which ſignifies *to act;* becauſe in this kind of poetry, the action is not recited, as in the epopea, but ſhews itſelf in thoſe that repreſent it.

126. The dramatic action is adapted to the eye, and muſt be painted like truth. Now, the judgment of the eye, with reſpect to ſhews, is infinitely more to be dreaded than that of the ear: therefor,

in the drama they recite what would appear moſt improbable in ſhew.

127. The moſt difficult and important queſtion in poetry, is to know in what dramatic probability conſiſts.

128. The actions are either all true and hiſtorical, as in Eſther; or only true in the main, and feigned in ſome particulars, as in the Horatii; or altered even in the foundation, as well as in the circumſtances, ſo that nothing of the hiſtory is retained but the names, as in Heraclius; or, laſtly, every thing is created and imagined, names, action, and circumſtances, as is done in almoſt all comedies.

129. For an action to be conformable to hiſtory, it is ſufficient to ſuppoſe it ſo. Horace ſays, *Famam ſequere.* Suppoſititions truth is as well received in poetry, as real truth and fact.

130. When we invent, we muſt, ſays Ariſtotle, preſent the feigned objects juſt as they *might* or *ought* to have been performed. Every man has not a very clear idea in regard to human action, of what is or is not poſſible. As to the poſſible in poetry, it is enough if men in general have a confuſed idea of this poſſibility, in ſuch caſes where, perhaps, upon a nearer inſpection of things, there is a real impoſſibility.

131. Beſides the *poſſible* and the *real* veriſimilitude, there is an *ordinary* and an *extraordinary* veriſimilitude. The firſt is that of an action that happens oftener, or at leaſt as often, as its contrary.

The ſecond concerns an action that happens more rarely than its contrary, but ſtill often enough not to be looked upon as a prodigy when it does happen.

132. We may alſo diſtinguiſh in dramatic action, three kinds of the *neceſſary*; that of things with regard to the action conſidered as natural; that of the ſame things with regard to the ſame action, conſidered as artificial; and, laſtly, the neceſſary chain or conſequence.

133. There are three ſorts of *unity* in the drama; unity of action, of time, and of place.

If in one Place, one Day, one Action end,
The well-pleas'd Audience earneſtly attend.

134. The action is *one*, when but one ſingle end is propoſed, to which all the means employed tend.

135. The dramatic action is divided into *acts*, and the acts into *ſcenes*. The act is an action which makes an eſſential part of another action, ſerves as a means to attain an ulterior end, and ſuppoſes other actions prior or poſterior to it.

136. When all the actions are upon the ſame direct line, and bring on each other till they arrive at the propoſed period, then the action is ſimple, and without epiſodes. But if, among theſe actions, there be any that are only collateral, and have but a ſuperficial connection with the principal action, we call them epiſodic. They are more or leſs ſo, according as they coincide ſooner or later with the

principal action. When they do not unite with it, even in the fifth act, they are abſolutely vicious.

137. The firſt act is called *protaſis* by the ancients, becauſe it contains the propoſition of the ſubject, and muſt clearly ſet forth the buſineſs in hand. It likewiſe acquaints us with all the actors, and gives part of their character. In fine, the plot begins in it, and the unravelling is prepared, but ſtill without making this preparation too perceptible.

138. In the ſecond, third, and fourth acts, the knot is gradually drawn cloſſer, and the concern of the ſpectator progreſſively encreaſes Nevertheleſs, moments of joy and hope are interſperſed, which relieve the mind, in order to make it fall again into the greateſt agitations.

139. The fifth act muſt be more affecting than all the others, becauſe, the longer the ſpectator has waited, the leſs willing he is to wait. In this act, the author decides the fate of all the perſonages that have appeared in the piece; and in the laſt ſcene the unravelling is compleated.

140. A ſcene is part of an act, characterized by the entrance, or by the exit of ſome of thoſe who bear a part in the action.

141. The unity of time is from ſun-riſing to ſun-riſing, or twenty-four hours; *i. e.* that the action repreſented, muſt begin and be ended within that ſpace. This rule is not ſo much a rule of rigour, as a modification, a ſoftening of a true rule, according to which the action ſhould not laſt longer

than the repreſentation, that is to ſay, begin and end in two or three hours at moſt.

142. The four inter-acts ſerve for diſtributing ſkilfully the time that ought to elapſe between the events; and one of them may contain a whole night.

143. The unity of place, taken rigorouſly, would alſo require that every thing be done preciſely in the ſame place, and that indulgence, which enlarges the limits of time, cannot ſo conveniently enlarge the limits of place. If any change were made in it, it would either be done without changing the decorations, and then there would be confuſion in the repreſentation; or elſe the decorations would be changed, and thereby the charm of illuſion would be broken.

144. This rule greatly embarraſſes poets, and often reduces them to unnatural ſuppoſitions. The ancients had the advantage of laying the ſcene in a public place, whither every one reſorted in coming out of his houſe, and where buſineſs was tranſacted.

145. As to the dramatic ſtile, it is regulated by the ſtate of the ſpeaker. This ſtate reſpects either his condition, or the paſſions which then agitate his mind.

146. In general, every dramatic actor ought to avoid what may ſavour of art, or of declamation; as, 1. Moral ſentences, or thoughts too common; 2. Figures of oratory; 3. Every thing that may indicate it is a poet, or an orator, that ſuggeſts to the actors what they ſpeak.

147. The diſcourſe of an actor ſpeaking alone, is called *monologue*, or ſoliloquy. Every monologue ought to be ſhort, becauſe it is almoſt out of nature. If it be long, the actor muſt be in a violent agitation.

148. The *dialogue* is when ſeveral actors ſpeak to each other. Every perſon that ſpeaks, muſt have a reaſon, at leaſt an apparent one for ſpeaking.

149. The diſtribution of ſpeech in the dialogue requires ſo much the more art, as this art muſt be concealed.

150. *Theatrical Decoration* muſt be ſuitable to the quality of the actors. If they are ſhepherds, the ſcene is a landſcape; that of kings is a palace, and ſo of the reſt.

151. Provided the character of the place be preſerved, it is allowable to embelliſh it with all the richneſs of art; colours and perſpective are all the expence of it.

152. The *Theatre* among the Romans was a large and magnificent place, with long porticos, covered galleries, and fine walks planted with trees, in which the people walked till the plays began. They diſtinguiſhed in the theatre, properly ſo called, three parts; 1. The *ſcaffold*, or the ſcene, which we now call the theatre; 2. The orcheſtra, which we name the pit; and 3. The amphitheatre.

153. All the actors were maſked. Their maſks were an entire head, like a helmet, having a painted viſage, hair, colours, and a large mouth, ſo diſ-

poſed that it greatly ſwelled the voice. Therefor they were called *perſona à perſonando.*

154. To expreſs the alterations of the paſſions, the actor uſed to take a maſk, which, beheld in profile, repreſented joy on one ſide, on the other grief, etc. and dexterouſly turned himſelf about, when neceſſary.

155. The Grecian actors wore long robes, called *ſyrma.* In comedy they had cloaks, *pallia;* and the Romans wore long upper garments, called *togæ.*

156. The declamation of the actors was a kind of finging; it had notes as muſic has, but not characters like thoſe of the muſical ſong.

157. The art of geſture being among the ancients part of the muſic, it had its notes, as declamation had; and what now appears ridiculous to us, is, that among the Romans it was common to hear one actor declame, and another to perform the geſticulations.

158. The covering of the feet and legs in tragedy, was the *cothurnus,* or buſkin, with high heels, which raiſed the ſtature of the actors, and made them approach to the heroic ſize. The ſandal or ſock, *ſoccus,* was flat and in the common way. The names of theſe things for the foot and leg, are made uſe of to point out the two ſpecies of the dramatic.

159. It is extremely rare to find a perfect actor: ſeveral have part of the talent; ſcarce any poſſeſſes it wholly.

X.

Of TRAGEDY.

160. *Tragedy* ſhares with the epopea in the grandeur and importance of the action, and differs from it only by the dramatic form.

161. As there are in the epopea two ſorts of the grand, the marvellous, and the heroic; ſo there may be two ſorts of tragedies; one heroic, which we ſimply call tragedy; the other marvellous, which is called a lyric ſpectacle, or opera.

162. An opera is thereſor, as to the dramatic part, the repreſentation of a marvellous action. The actors are gods, or the heroes demi-gods; and they announce themſelves by ſuch feats, language, and reflexion of voice as ſurpaſs the laws of ordinary probability.

163. It was neceſſary that the language of opera actors ſhould be entirely lyric, that it expreſs the extacies, the enthuſiaſm, the ebriety of ſentiment, to the end that muſic might produce therein all theſe effects.

164. *Tragedy*, on the contrary, does not deviate from nature. What is grand in it goes no higher than heroiſm. Its object is to excite terror and compaſſion.

165. Every theatrical action is properly an alarm of the affections and the paſſions. But the action of tragedy is a violent ſhock, becauſe the greateſt

concerns are depending, the encounters being between extraordinary powers, the powers of heroes, *i. e.* of men much ſuperior to other men,

166. With ſtatuaries, the figure of a man is of the natural ſize when it is under ſix feet: it is heroic when between ſix and ten; and beyond this it is a coloſſal ſtatue. According to this analogy, the action of Tragedy is heroic, when it is the effect of a quality of the ſoul carried to an extraordinary degree, and extraordinary to a limited point. Below this, it is the common, and beyond it the gigantic. The great, the beautiful, the noble, in ſhort, the heroic, are found in the medium.

167. Vices are included in the idea of that heroiſm we are ſpeaking of. They are heroic, when their principle is ſome quality that ſuppoſes uncommon boldneſs and reſolution. Such are the intrepidity of *Catiline*, the revenge of *Medea*, etc.

168. An action is heroic, either in itſelf, that is, when its object is great, or from the character of thoſe who perform it, when kings or princes act, or are acted againſt.

169. There may, and there has been brought upon the ſtage, a low or *City Tragedy*, which by its adverſaries is called *weeping Comedy*. But ſince it is an agreeable and intereſting entertainment, the name given to it is nothing but playing upon words. It ſhall be, if they will, a third ſpecies of the drama, a new ſource of theatrical pleaſure. The ſame may happen in time, to the pieces of Mr. Di-

derot, when they ſhall have been brought to the perfection they are ſurceptible of, or the public ſhall have ſtamped them with the ſeal of its approbation.

170. All pleaſure and all pain, felt at a tragedy, are founded on this maxim: *Homo ſum, humani nihil à me alienum puto.* Tragedy exhibits men that ſtrongly bear the ſtamp of human nature, that have its paſſions, its exceſſes, its weakneſſes, and its miſeries; and it preſents them on that ſide which may create pity and terror.

171. Pity makes our bowels yearn, becauſe we ſee our fellow-creatures unhappy. Terror makes the heart ſhrink, becauſe we fear for ourſelves the misfortunes we behold in others: but this fear is mixed with a certain pleaſing ſenſation, which proceeds from the compariſon we make of our own condition with that of the unhappy ſufferers.

172. *Tragedy* is characterized by the ſpecies of the ſentiment it produces, not by that which it contains

173 Every tragedy which occaſions only terror, or pity, is imperfect: that which produces neither of theſe ſenſations, is not really a tragedy; and that producing either only in ſome places, is a tragedy but in thoſe places.

174. The enterprize of a good man ought to be good, otherwiſe he would ceaſe to be good. That of a wicked man muſt be bad, otherwiſe he would ceaſe to be wicked. That of a man in the middle

way, ought to be good in itſelf, but accompanied or preceded by ſome other thing that makes the actor blameable. The good or the bad muſt go beyond mediocrity, otherwiſe there would be nothing heroic in it.

175. The virtuous man ought to triumph over the wicked: there reſults from it a joyous ſenſation, proportionate to the preceding fears and inquietudes. Yet, according to Ariſtotle, the unravelment that is performed by joy, is more comic than tragic.

176. Let a virtuous man, or at leaſt one more virtuous than vicious, be the victim of his duty, as the *Curiatii;* or of his own weakneſs, like Ariadne and Phædra; or of another man's weakneſs, like Polieuctus; or of a father's prejudices, like Hippolytus; or of the tranſient anger of a brother, like Camilla; let him be precipitated by a misfortune which he could not avoid, like Andromache; or by a kind of fatality to which all men are liable, like Oedipus; this is the truly tragical, this is what ſhakes the ſoul, pierces the heart, and makes us ſhed tears.

177. When we join to the atrocity of the action, the ſplendor of grandeur, or the elevated ſtation of the perſonages, the action is at the ſame time heroic and tragical, and produces in us compaſſion mixed with terror; becauſe we ſee men, greater, more potent, more perfect than ourſelves, cruſhed by the misfortunes incident to human nature.

178. The conflict of the paſſions is what intereſts

moſt in the tragical repreſentation. Sometimes they wreſtle together in different perſons: ſometimes the conflict is in the ſame perſon and in the ſame heart, and this produces agitations infinitely ſtronger. According to the laws of decorum, the nobler paſſion ought always to prevail.

179. It is not neceſſary that blood ſhould be ſhed, in order to excite tragical ſenſation. Ariadne forſaken by Theſeus in the iſle of Naxos, and Philoctetes in that of Lemnos, are in tragical ſituations, becauſe they are as cruel as death itſelf.

180. Greece was the cradle of the fine arts, and it is there we muſt look for the origin of dramatic poetry. The feſtivals of Bacchus gave birth to it. They ſacrificed a he-goat to that god; and during the ſacrifice, the people and the prieſts ſung in chorus, in honour of that deity, hymns, which, from the nature of the victim, were called *tragedy*, or *goat-ſong*.

181. Theſe hyms were nothing but a lyric chant, in which there prevailed a kind of monotony, that at length lulled the congregation to ſleep. In order to throw more variety into it, they introduced an actor, who recited ſomething. Theſpis was the firſt who attempted this novelty. This recital was divided into ſeveral parts, to interſect the ſong at different times, and encreaſe the pleaſure of variety.

182. As there was but one actor in it, this was not ſufficient: a ſecond was wanted, to conſtitute

the drama, and make a dialogue. Æſchylus availed himſelf of the opening made by Theſpis, and ſuddenly formed the heroic drama, or *tragedy*: he introduced two actors inſtead of one: he made them undertake an action, in which he tranſplanted every thing of the epic action that could ſuit his purpoſe. He brought into it expoſition, plots, efforts, unravelments, paſſions, intereſts. He gave characters, manners, and a proper elocution, to his actors; and the chorus, which in the beginning had been the baſis of the ſpectacle, was then but its acceſſory, and ſerved only as an interlude to the action, juſt as the action had formerly been to the chorus.

XI.

Of the ancient DRAMATIC *Authors.*

183. Tragedy, with Æſchylus, has a gigantic air, hard features, and an unruly gait It was new-born tragedy, well framed in all its parts, but yet deſtitute of that politeneſs which time and art add to new inventions.

184. Sophocles, happily born for this kind of poetry, with a large fund of genius, a delicate taſte, a wonderful facility of expreſſion, reduced the tragic muſe to the rules of decency and truth. He knew how to affect the heart throughout the action, and carefully laboured his verſe; in ſhort, he roſe by his genius to ſuch a degree, that his works are

become the example of the beautiful, and the model of rules.

185. Euripides, at firſt, applied himſelf to philoſophy; hence it is that all his pieces abound with excellent maxims of morality. He is tender, affecting, truly tragical, though leſs elevated and leſs nervous than Sophocles. He compoſed ſeventy-five plays, and yet was crowned only five times; but juſtice was not always conſulted in the diſtribution of theſe honours.

186. In general the Greek tragedy is ſimple, natural, eaſy to be followed, and little complicated. The action is prepared, is woven, and unravelled without labour; art does not ſeem to have the leaſt ſhare; and on this very account it is the maſterpiece of art and genius.

187. Seneca, a Latin tragic poet, is much inferior to the Greeks. His pieces are monſtrous coloſſuſes rather than proportioned and regular bodies. They abound with ſuperfetations. We abhor his deſcriptions, and are diſguſted and tired with his prolixity and redundancy.

XII.

Of COMEDY.

188. Tragedy is an imitation of the beautiful and the grand: *Comedy* imitates the ridiculous. The one elevates the mind and forms the heart; the other poliſhes the manners, and corrects the outward

demeanour. *Comedy* may be defined a repreſentation of an action in common life, calculated to make the audience laugh.

189. The ridiculous, then, is eſſentially the object of comedy. But what is it we call ridiculous? It is, according to Ariſtotle, every defect that cauſes deformity without pain. The buſineſs of comedy is deformity relative to manners, repreſented in its ridiculous light.

190. This deformity conſiſts in a contradiction of the thoughts of ſome man, of his ſentiments, of his manners, of his air, his way of doing things, to nature, the received laws and cuſtoms, and to whatever ſeems to require the preſent ſituation of him in whom the deformity exiſts.

191. Every thing that is ridiculous, is not capable of exciting laughter. There is a ridiculouſneſs that is ſlovenly, and diſguſts the ſpectator: this is the cluniſh kind. He that appears on the ſtage, ſhould be agreeable and delicate. In painting the manners of citizens very near the reſemblance, it is uſual to add, at the ſame time, a certain ſpice of the groteſque, which is more eaſily felt than defined.

192. What the Latins called the *vis comica*, is the truly ridiculous, but laid on thicker or lighter, according as the comic part is more or leſs delicate. There is an exquiſite limit, within which laughter is not excited, and beyond it riſibility ceaſes, at leaſt among well-bred people. The more our

taſte is refined, and exerciſed upon good models, the more we feel it.

193. Truth is deeply coloured, 1. When the ſtrokes are multiplied, and preſented combined together; 2. When any action exceeds ordinary probability; 3. In ſtriking contraſts.

194. In comedy may be diſtinguiſhed two ſorts of actors and characters, the one true, the other comic. The firſt muſt be rendered, as in tragedy, with truth, accuracy, ſtrength, and decency: the other with more force than truth, more affectation than accuracy.

195. The ridiculous occurs every where; not one of our actions, thoughts, geſtures, motions, but which are ſuſceptible of it. They may be preſerved entire, and turned to grimace by the ſlighteſt addition. So that whoever is born a comic poet, has an inexauſtible fund in all the characters to be met with in ſociety.

196. Between the two extremes of the delicate and the nervous comic characters, there are ſeveral mediums, of which it is eaſy to form an idea; and perhaps it is in the medium only, that the true comic exiſts, which chears the mind, and at the ſame time ſtrikes the imagination.

197. The ſtile of comedy ought to be clear, ſimple, familiar, yet never low, grovelling, nor heavy; ſeaſoned with ſmart, delicate thoughts, expreſſions more lively than pompous, without lofty words, formal figures, and long ſentences of morality.

198. Not but that comedy ſometimes raiſes its tone; but, in its boldeſt flights, it does not forget its limits; it is always what it ought to be.

199. *Comedy* aroſe after tragedy. In its beginnings it painted from nature, which required much leſs genius than is neceſſary in drawing characters and manners. *Old Comedy* had a long while the privilege of attacking citizens, and even the gods, with impunity: but when it dared to take magiſtrates in hand, they put a curb upon it, and made a law againſt bringing any known names upon the ſtage.

200. In order to elude this law, *middle Comedy* aſſumed imaginary names, under which they painted, from nature, the characters and manners of thoſe who were to be turned into ridicule.

201. A ſecond law forbad making real adventures the ſubject; and brought comedy to nearly the ſame ſtate in which it is at preſent. Inſtead of being a ſatire on individuals, it became the mirror of life and manners; and this was called *new Comedy*.

XIII.

Of the ancient comic Poets.

202. The taſte of the people for whom the comedies of Ariſtophanes were written, and the taſte of the author, are their criterion. The people of Athens were vain, light, inconſtant, without mo-

rals, without reſpect for the gods, inſolent, malignant, and more prone to laugh at an impertinence, than to take inſtruction from an uſeful maxim. Ariſtophanes himſelf had all theſe vices; and conſequently without any reluctance, he fell in entirely with the taſte of the public for whom he wrote.

203. His *Plutus*, which is one of his beſt conducted pieces, may ſhew how far this poet has carried the licentiouſneſs of imagination, and the frolics of genius. Here he rallies the government, laſhes the rich, inſults the poor, mocks the gods, and ſcatters his filth: but all this is done by ſallies, and with a great deal of vivacity and wit.

204. The Romans made attempts towards comedy, before they had any acquaintance with the Greeks, but they had nothing but farcical actors, fit to amuſe the vulgar. Livius Andronicus, a Grecian by birth, exhibited comedy to them nearly the ſame as it was then at Athens; but the expreſſion was neceſſarily tinged with the rudeneſs of the Roman people, who were then acquainted with nothing but fire and arms.

205. Andronicus was ſucceeded by Nevius and Ennius, who poliſhed the Roman ſtage more and more, as did likewiſe Pacuvius, Cecilius, and Attius. At laſt came Plautus and Terence, who carried Latin comedy as high as ever it has been.

206. Plautus having given comedy to Rome, immediately after the ſatires, which were farces mixed with rudeneſs and obſcenities, he was obliged to

adapt his works to the reigning taſte. Born with a free and lively genius, he has every where ſtrewed wit and pleaſantry; but bad puns, trifling quibbles, ſilly jeſts, and buffooneries, remain in his pieces.

207. Plautus's pieces are more natural than thoſe of Ariſtophanes, except the Amphytrion. Men, and human adventures, are always preſented under probable characters, without intermixing thoſe whims and oddities with which the Grecian poet abounds.

208. Terence's manner is quite different from that of Plautus: his comedy is nothing but the portrait of city-life; a portrait where the objects are choſen with taſte, and painted gracefully and elegantly. Every where decent, delicate, elegant, poliſhed and graceful; he wants nothing to make him perfect, but the true *vis comica*, which we have mentioned Sect. 192 Hence it is, that his dramas are almoſt of the middling kind. In many places, his pieces only want atrocity in the events, to make them tragical, and importance to render them heroic.

XIV.

Of the FRENCH *Theatre.*

209. The eleventh century, notwithſtanding its profound ignorance, gave birth to the poets that wrote in *Roman*, that is to ſay, in the corrupted

Roman language, which was become the only vulgar tongue.

210. They made themſelves more known in the twelfth century, under the names of *inventors*, *ſtory-tellers*, *ſingers* and *jugglers*. Their works were void of rules, ſublimity, and correctneſs; but, to make amends for theſe defects, there were ſimplicity, ingenuouſneſs, and ſometimes ſtrokes of genius agreeable enough in them.

211. Theſe ſparks of poetry appeared chiefly in the two extremities of the kingdom, Provence and Picardy. With the poetical ſpirit, a ſpirit of gallantry was diffuſed in France. In Provence, there was the famous *Court of Love;* and Picardy, its rival, had alſo its *Sports and Paſtimes under the Elm*.

212. The *Troubadours* (or *Inventors*, as they are above called) compoſed ſome comedies, of which there is only one left, intitled *de l'Heregia del Preyres*, of the hereſy of prieſts. The author's name was Anſelm Faidit. He was a man of pleaſure, who took a young lady of quality out of a monaſtery and married her, and they paſſed their life in going from one court to another, always welcome every where.

213. The fourteenth century produced fewer poets than the preceding ages. The ſhortneſs of PHILIP THE LONG'S reign was an irreparable misfortune to the provençal poetry. In this century we find one tragic poet, Paraſols, a native of

Limoſin, or of *Ciſteron*, who compoſed five fine tragedies of the exploits and atchievements of *Jane* queen of Naples.

214. In the fifteenth century, properly ſpeaking, the hiſtory of the French theatre begins. The oldeſt plays we have at this time, are *The Myſteries of Religion*. They did not think it any prophanation to bring ſacred things upon the ſtage; and this partly proceeded from the low ideas men had of thoſe things, and partly from their being accuſtomed to repreſentations in divine ſervice. Accordingly, a play was only like a ſupplement to that ſervice, and was even uſually acted in the church-yards or burying grounds.

215. John Michel wrote a play about the middle of the fifteenth century, which was an hiſtorical ſeries of the life of Jeſus Chriſt, from his baptiſm to his reſurrection. There are no acts in it, nor have the ſcenes any connection. When the perſonages on the ſtage have ſaid what they had to ſay, they retire, and others come on, who diſcourſe on quite another ſubject. After a ſufficient number of ſcenes the day ended, without any other reaſon, but that they had ſpoken enough. The ſpectators departed, and the next day, as much was exhibited again. This took up ſeveral days.

216. Moſt of the plays of the paſſion were a kind of opera: there was machinery and muſic in them. Some of thoſe pious repreſentations were dumb-

ſhew, and they were uſed as ornaments in public rejoicings.

217. However, all the ancient French plays were not taken from Scripture, or the lives of ſaints. They had alſo *farces* and *mummeries*. There is one, called the *farce* of *Pathelin*, which contains many pleaſantries. To judge of it from the language, it muſt have been compoſed near about the time of Lewis XII; but there are paſſages in it that do not appear unworthy of the age of *Moliere*, not of Moliere himſelf.

218. Under the reign of Francis, a taſte for the Belles-Lettres became more diffuſive; all the arts, all the ſciences, revived. Anthony Foreſtier, and James Bourgeois, wrote comedies at that time, which probably are loſt.

219. The firſt of all the French tragedies is Jodelle's *Cleopatra*. It is a compoſition of great ſimplicity: no action, no repreſentation, a mixture of high and low language in every part. There is always on the ſtage a chorus in the antique way, which ends every act, and throws out a mere jumble of moral ſentences. This piece, which was acted at Paris before Henry II. met with prodigious applauſe. The ſame poet wrote likewiſe a tragedy of Dido, and two comedies.

220. The manners of thoſe pieces were very licentious; and indeed the age of Henry II. deſpiſed alike both virtue and decorum.

221. John Anthony de Baif, and John de la

Peruſe, wrote alſo for the theatre. The latter produced a play, *Of the Sinner juſtified by Faith.* Robert Garnier appeared under Henry III. Though his friends have extolled him as ſuperior to the ancient Greek poets, he was very imperfect. He had more energy than Jodelle, but his pieces are not better conſtructed.

222 To Garnier ſucceeded Alexander Hardy, a Pariſian; the moſt fertile author that ever ſtudied, in France, for the ſtage. He wrote ſix hundred pieces; but, as ſoon as we read him, his fertility ceaſes to be marvellous. Neither the verſification, nor the diſpoſition of the ſubjects, coſt him much pains: the laws of decorum are quite neglected in them.

223. Mairet and Rotrou alſo acquired reputation by their works; but all the above-mentioned poets were eclipſed as ſoon as the great Corneille appeared.

224 He was born in 1606, and his firſt piece was *Melite*, acted in 1624, which was planned from a little incident at a citizen's houſe at Rouen The public found a new turn in this piece; they diſcerned an original ſpirit in it, and from thence expected to ſee the ſtage improved

225. The ſix or ſeven firſt pieces of Mr. Corneille, ſeem to be unworthy of him, if we eſtimate them according to the talents of the author: but conſidering the times he lived in, we perceive that none but an extraordinary genius could have com-

poſed them. Melite, when compared with Hardy's pieces, is admirable.

226. The ſtage flouriſhed then under the patronage of the great cardinal Richelieu: his miniſtry at once gave birth to Corneille, Rotrou, Mairet, Triſtan, Scudery, Du Ryer, beſides ſeveral authors whoſe names are forgotten.

227. They began then to diſcover the theatrical rules, and particularly that of the three unities: but moſt authors ſtill deſpiſed thoſe rules, and even openly derided them.

228. In thoſe days, tragi-comedy was pretty much in vogue, a medley of bad tragedy, with a kind of comedy which was no better. Moſt of the ſubjects were invented, and had a very romantic air: and, accordingly, it was cuſtomary to prefix to thoſe pieces long explanatory arguments.

229. One of the greateſt obligations we are under to Mr. Corneille, is his having purified the theatre: he was at firſt carried away by the eſtabliſhed cuſtom, but he oppoſed it immediately after; and ſince Clitandre, his ſecond piece, we find nothing licentious in his works.

230. In Medea, he ſeemed to ſoar to the ſublimeſt tragic height. But in the Cid, he ſhewed himſelf greater and more powerful than he had yet been. No theatrical piece ever had ſo much ſucceſs. It excited the jealouſy of cardinal Richelieu, who, in point of glory, took ſuch meaſures as ſeem moſt contradictory to it. Being alarmed at Mr.

Corneille's high reputation, he ſpirited up ſeveral authors againſt the Cid, and put himſelf at the head of them. Mr. de Scudery publiſhed his obſervations on that piece. The French academy afterwards gave theirs, which performance was worthy of the great reputation of that riſing ſociety.

231. The ſame year that produced the Cid, alſo brought forth Triſtan's Mariamne, another celebrated piece, which ſtood its ground on the theatre above a century.

232. After having attained as far as the Cid, Mr. Corneille roſe ſtill higher in the Horatii; in fine, he went on to Cinna and Polyeuctus, above which there is nothing. Thoſe pieces were of an unknown ſpecies, and a new theatre appeared. Then Mr. Corneille, by ſtudying Ariſtotle and Horace, by his experience, by his reflections, and ſtill more by his genius, found the true rules of the dramatic poem, and diſcovered the ſources of the beautiful, which he afterwards laid open to all the world, in the excellent diſcourſes prefixed to his plays. Hence it is that he is conſidered as the father of the French ſtage. He was the firſt that gave it a rational form, and at the ſame time he brought it to its higheſt degree of perfection.

233. The remainder of his pieces ſhew what muſt neceſſarily happen to a great man who continues writing to the end of his life. His beginnings are weak and imperfect, but already worthy of admiration, conſidering the age he lived in; afterwards he ſoars

as high as his art can reach; in the end he grows languid, ſinks gradually, and is no longer like himſelf but by intervals.

234. As the moſt perfect human productions are not void of defects, we find in Corneille's beſt pieces, obſolete words, ſometimes embarraſſed ſpeeches, and paſſages that favour of the declaimer.

235. He ſaw the taſte of the age was turning entirely towards the moſt paſſionate love, and the leaſt mixed with heroiſm; but he nobly diſdained to comply with that new taſte.

236. This leads us to his illuſtrious rival, John Racine, born in 1639, and educated by the recluſes of Port Royal. He compoſed for his firſt eſſay, the *Rival Brothers*, in 1663, which was followed by Alexander, in 1666.

237. He improved much farther in Andromache, in 1668; and Britannicus, two years after, ſilenced the critics, or at leaſt compleatly triumphed over them.

238. Berenice, in 1671, was a kind of duel between Corneille and Racine. The victory was adjudged to the younger: both court and city paſſionately upheld the Berenice of Mr. Racine, though critics pronounced this tragedy to be nothing but a ſeries of elegies.

239. He compoſed Bajazet, in order to confound thoſe who affirmed that he was only an imitator of the ancients, from whom he borrowed his chief beauties; and, after all, they had nothing to offer

in oppoſition to the applauſes this piece received. His Mithridates was not leſs extolled, and ſoon after, Iphigenia compleatly crowned the reputation of its author.

240. A devout turn of mind, together with ſome diſguſts, induced Mr. Racine to renounce theatrical compoſitions: but the eſtabliſhment of St. Cyr gave him an opportunity to apply tragedy to ſacred things. Eſther is a very fine play, and Athaliah a real maſter-piece. The latter was acted in 1691, and Mr. Racine died in 1699. Corneille went before him, in 1684.

241. This we think is a proper place for introducing the parallel of theſe two great poets, drawn by Mr. de la Bruyere, an author no leſs celebrated in his way. "Corneille, ſays he, cannot be e-"qualled in the places where he excells; he has "then an original and inimitable character, but he "is excentric. In ſome of his beſt pieces, there are "inexcuſable faults againſt morals, a declamatory "ſtile, that impedes the action and makes it lan-"guid, negligencies in the verſification and in the "expreſſion, which cannot be accounted for in ſo "great a man. The moſt eminent qualification "in him is his genius, which was truly ſublime. "Racine is uniform, always the ſame every where, "both in the plan and conduct of his pieces, which "are accurate, regular, drawn from good ſenſe "and nature: in his verſification he is correct, "rich in his rhymes, elegant, numerous, harmo-

" nious. However, if it be allowable to make " ſome compariſon between them, and to charac- " terize both by what is moſt peculiar to them, " and by what uſually ſhines in their works, per- " haps one might thus ſpeak of them. Corneille " keeps us in ſubjection to his characters, and his " ideas; Racine adapts himſelf to ours. The for- " mer paints men as they ought to be; the latter " paints them as they are. In the firſt, there is more " of what we admire, and of what we ought even to " imitate; in the ſecond, there is more of what " we feel within ourſelves. The one elevates, a- " ſtoniſhes, ſubdues, and inſtructs; the other " pleaſes, moves, touches and penetrates. What " is moſt grand, moſt imperious in reaſon, is hand- " led by the former; what is moſt tender and moſt " pleaſing in the paſſions, by the latter. In the " one we find rules, precepts, maxims; in the other, " taſte and ſentiment. The mind is more em- " ployed by Corneille's pieces; by thoſe of Racine, " it is more agitated and affected. Corneille is " more moral, Racine more natural. It appears, " the one imitated Sophocles, and that the other " owes more to Euripides."

242. From theſe two men united, an idea may be formed of tragic perfection, ſo as to include in this idea, the rule and meaſure of the merit of every tragedy, and they may be regarded as more or leſs perfect, according to their degrees of proxi- mity with this idea.

243. Corneille and Racine have had no ſucceſſors, properly ſo called; for though the tragic ſcene, ſince their time, has been nriched with ſeveral pieces, in which there are great beauties, no poet has furniſhed a career ſimilar to theirs. Thoſe that may be placed immediately after them, are Meſſrs. Crebillon and Voltaire, both ſtill living.

244. The tragedies of the firſt almoſt form a ſpecies a-part, which may be called the *terrible* tragic, as that of Corneille is that of the *ſublime*, and that of Racine the *moving* The terror excited by Rhadamiſte, Electra, etc. is carried to ſuch a height, that the leaſt degree farther would be ſhocking. Nor is Mr. Crebillon's verſification equal to that of his predeceſſors.

245. Moſt of Mr. de Voltaire's tragedies have met with a brilliant ſucceſs, and this iſtuſtrious poet has handled almoſt all kinds of pieces; which will ever be an inconteſtible proof of the ſtrength of his art, and the fineneſs of his genius.

246 *French* comedy begins with Moliere, who, like Corneille in regard to tragedy, at once created and carried it to its greateſt perfection He was born in 1620; his firſt piece, intitled *l'Etourdi*, (*the Blunderer*) was acted in 1653, and he roſe as far as the *Miſanthrope*, which appeared in 1666, and may be looked upon as the moſt perfect work in *French* comedy. The *Tartuffe*, the three firſt acts of which were repreſented in 1664, but which Moliere was not permitted to bring again upon the ſtage till 1669, is ano-

ther piece as worthy of applauſe, for the ſingularity and boldneſs of the ſubject, as for the ſagacity with which it is treated. Moliere died in 1673.

247. In ſurveying what Moliere did in the ſpace of twenty years, we cannot but admire his happy fertility, the extent and the reſources of his genius. He is perhaps ſtill more worthy of praiſe, in the ſubjects he has taken from ancient and modern authors, or in the ſtrokes he has borrowed from them, than in his own productions. Always ſuperior to his models, he gave new life to what he had copied. The models diſappeared, he became the original. In the ſame manner did Plautus and Terence imitate the Grecians.

248. The two Latin poets, more uniform in the choice of characters, and in the manner of painting them, repreſented only part of the general morals and manners of Rome. The *French* poet not only expoſed on the ſtage, the vices and follies common to all ages and countries; but he alſo painted them with ſtrokes ſo well adapted to his nation, that his comedies may be conſidered as the hiſtory of the manners, modes, and taſte of his age: an advantage that will ever diſtinguiſh Moliere from other comic authors.

249. Continually obſerving nature, and adapting to his art, all the attitudes, and all the expreſſions that characterize the paſſions, he copied the geſture, the tone, the language of all the ſenſations which man is ſuſceptible of, in all conditions, and in all ſtations. He knew how to mix the ſatyrical with

the ſimple; the ſingular with the natural; which is the higheſt point of perfection in every ſpecies.

250. Moliere makes the moſt auſtere laugh, inſtructs every body, and diſguſts no body; paints not only the manners of the age, but thoſe of all ranks and conditions. He plays off the high and the low, the ridiculous and the vicious, yet none have a right to be offended at it.

251. He is charged with ſome blemiſhes, ſuch as not being happy in unravelling his plots, and ſometimes running into too low comedy. With regard to the latter, we perceive, in peruſing the hiſtory of his life, and of his pieces, that it was rather through neceſſity than taſte that he ſtooped to this ſubaltern kind: and even in the comedies where it is prevalent, ſtill there are many things very agreeable, and truly original.

252. Moliere, perhaps, has been ſtill leſs equalled by thoſe that came after him, than Corneille and Racine.

With him fell Comedy;—ſo rude the ſhock,
In vain we hope ſhe'll re-aſſume the ſock.

253. Regnard and Des-Touches, ſince Moliere's time, are thoſe who have laboured with moſt ſucceſs in the comic ſtrain. *The Glorieux*, (Vain-glorious) and the *Married philoſopher*, of the latter are pieces worthy of the author of the *Miſanthrope* and *Tartuffe*.

254. The public reliſhed the plays of Meſſrs. de

Boiſſy, La Chauſſee, and Fagan, which are of the mixed kind, mentioned Section 168.

255. Mr. de Marivaux alſo deſerves to be diſtinguiſhed: he has given to the two theatres, French and Italian, ſome comedies of a truly original turn; but, like all the other works of this author, they are cenſured for a profuſion of wit.

XV.

Of other THEATRES.

256. We ſhall not deſcant on theſe, ſo largely as we have done on the French theatre. That which we have juſt mentioned by the name of *Italian Theatre*, is a ſpectacle or public ſhew, eſtabliſhed in France ſince the year 1716. The comedians, then invited from Italy, repreſented at firſt in their own tongue; but many perſons who were attracted by their exhibitions, and did not underſtand Italian, reliſhed this entertainment but very imperfectly: upon which, the comedians were immediately adviſed to diſtribute, before the repreſentations, printed arguments in French, briefly ſetting forth the ſubject of the piece. This ſucceeded with the public.

257. The Italian comedians having at length learned French, and qualified themſelves for acting in this language, moſt of the pieces exhibited on their theatre were printed; and this collection is in eſteem. It is called the *Italian New Theatre*, in

nine volume 8vo. Paris, 1733—1736. Gerhardi's *Italian Theatre* is rather a collection of ſcenes than pieces. There are ſome very witty things in them. This collection makes ſix volumes in 12mo, printed at Amſterdam, in 1701.

258 The Engliſh, as well as the Spaniards, had already a ſtage, whilſt the French uſed nothing but treſtles. Lopez de Vega was worth many dramatic poets to Spain, as he compoſed no leſs than two thouſand pieces.

259 Shakeſpear flouriſhed about the ſame time in England. He created the Engliſh ſtage; his genius was ſurpriſingly vigorous and fertile, natural and ſublime; without the leaſt ſpark of good taſte, and without any knowlege of rules. The merit of this author has been of great prejudice to the Engliſh theatre, by bringing into repute and perpetuating his defects.

260. Mr. Addiſon is the firſt Engliſhman that compoſed a rational tragedy; which is his Cato. It is alſo written from the beginning to the end, with that maſculine and energic elegance, which Corneille had given a model of in France: yet, all the beauties to be met with therein, cannot make it a fine tragedy, becauſe moſt of the rules of this kind of drama are not obſerved in it. In moſt other Engliſh tragedies, the heroes are bombaſtic, and the heroines extravagant. The ſtile of their comedies is more natural; but this nature often ap-

pears to be that of a debauchée, rather than of a well-bred modeſt man.

261. Of all the Engliſh writers, Congreve has carried the glory of comedy higheſt. He wrote but few pieces, but they are all excellent in their kind. The rules of the theatre are rigorouſly obſerved in them. They abound with characters exquiſitely ſhaded and heightened, and every where they ſpeak like civilized, well bred people. Congrève's pieces are the moſt witty, and the moſt regular; thoſe of Vanbrugh are the gayeſt, and thoſe of Wycherley the moſt nervous.

262 The Marquis Maffei's Merope holds in Italy, the ſame rank as Addiſon's Cato in England. The moſt celebrated poet that nation has at preſent, is Mr. Mataſtaſio, who unites the ſplendor of the lyric ſcene with the beauties of tragic poetry.

263. The firſt comedy acted in Germany, in 1497, was written by the famous Reuchlin. The German theatre does not yet exiſt, or at leaſt it has but juſt received its birth, as we may be convinced of, by caſting an eye on the ample liſt of all the dramatic pieces printed in Germany, from the year 1500, to the preſent times, which may be ſeen in the preface to the *German Theatre*, publiſhed by profeſſor Gottſched. For which we may conſult the 11th chapter of the work intitled, *The Progreſs of the Germans in the Sciences, Belles Lettres, and Arts*, etc. at Amſterdam, 1752, in 12mo.

XVI.

Of OPERAS.

264. The Opera, of which we have already given a definition in Sect. 161, 162. is an exhibition equally fantaſtical and magnificent, where the eye and the ear receive more ſatisfaction than the mind, where ſubjection to muſic renders the moſt ridiculous faults neceſſary, where Ariettas are ſung in the deſtruction of cities, and dances are performed round a tomb: where we ſee palaces erected and demoliſhed. in the twinkling of an eye, gods, dæmons, magicians, deluſions, monſters, etc.

265. Such extravagancies are tolerated; they are even liked. becauſe we are there in a fairy land; and provided there be ſhew in it, with fine dancing, fine muſic, and a few intereſting ſcenes, we are contented. It would be as ridiculous to require unity of action in an opera, as to introduce dances and dæmons in a tragedy.

266. However, though operas are excuſed from adhering to the three principal dramatic rules, the beſt are thoſe in which they are leaſt infringed: they are, however, to be met with in many, ſo natural are they, and ſo much do they ſerve to intereſt the ſpectator.

267. With great reaſon more perfection is required in a tragedy than in an opera; becauſe in the former, the attention is not divided; the pleaſure

does not depend on a decoration or a dance, but it is the mind alone that muſt be pleaſed.

XVII.

Of PARODIES.

268. The principal ſpecies of parody is a work in verſe, compoſed on a whole piece, or on a conſiderable part of a known piece of poetry, which is diverted to another ſubject and another ſenſe, by changing ſome expreſſions.

269. In the hands of a critic, parody becomes a torch which enables us to ſee the defects of an author who has ſurreptitiouſly obtained admiration. Examples of it occur in antiquity, and they are nearly in the taſte of the parodies now given on the theatres.

270. Menage parodied a ſonnet of Malherbe, and Deſpreaux, with ſome of his friends, whole ſcenes of the Cid, in the Chapelain Decoiffe. (The Chaplain Uncoiffed.) There are in four volumes 8vo. printed at Paris in 1738, *The Parodies of the Italian new Theatre*, ſome of which are very ingenious.

271. The Abbé Sallier has given a very good diſſertation *on the Origin and the Characteriſtic of Parody*, in the ſeventh tome of the *Hiſtory of the Royal Academy of Inſcriptions and Belles-Lettres*, page 398, of the Paris edition.

XVIII.

Of VERSIFICATION *in* PROSE.

272. This is a kind of paradox, maintained by Mr. de la Motte, who, after having written nothing all his life but verſes, or works in proſe formed on his verſes, even wrote againſt his own art, and has treated it with extreme contempt.

273. He pretends that rhyme is a barbarous practice of late invention. Yet all nations, excepting the Greeks and the ancient Romans, made uſe of rhyme, and ſtill write in rhyme. The return of the ſame ſounds is ſo natural to the ear, that we have found rhyme eſtabliſhed among ſavages, as it is at Rome, Paris, London, and Madrid. In Montaigne, there is a ſong in American rhymes, tranſlated into French; and in the Spectator, a tranſlation of a Lapland ode in rhyme, which is replete with fine ſentiments.

274. Either in rhyme, or in cadenced ſyllables, poetry has been and ever will be cultivated by all nations. No perſon can read the fineſt verſes, turned into proſe; and from this alone, we have a right to infer the extraordinary merit of poetry.

275. French poetry is obliged to adhere to rhyme; becauſe the genius of the language is perſpicuity and elegance, which interdicts all licentiouſneſs in the verſification, which ought to go on like proſe, in the preciſe order of the ideas. Therefore this

poetry ſtands eſſentially in need of the return of the ſame ſounds, that it may not be confounded with proſe.

276. The prerogatives of harmony cannot be better expreſſed than Mr. de la Faye has done, in an ode againſt Mr. de la Motte's ſyſtem, and particularly in this ſo juſtly admired ſtrophe.

From the ſame rigorous conſtraint,
Which ſeems the mind to tie,
New ſtrength it gains, becomes not faint,
But takes a flight more high.
Thus when the water, in its courſe,
Is cloſe preſs'd any where,
It riſes with redoubled force,
And ſprings into the air.
So from thoſe *rules* which rigid ſeem,
Good verſes riſe to more eſteem.

XIX.

Of APOLOGUE *or* FABLE.

277. The Apologue, properly ſpeaking, is the entertainment of children, and differs from others but in the minuteneſs and innocence of the actors. On this little theatre we ſee no Alexanders nor Cæſars; the fly and the ant appear on it, act the parts of men, in their manner, and exhibit a play equally pure and inſtructive.

278. The inventors of the Apologue judged

they would not be cenſured for giving ſpeech and thoughts at firſt to animals, who, having nearly the ſame organs that we have, ſeem perhaps mute to us, only becauſe we do not underſtand their language; afterwards to trees, which, as they have life, eaſily obtained ſentiment from poets; and laſtly, to every thing that moves or exiſts in the univerſe.

279. All the rules of the Apologue are contained in thoſe of the Epopea and the Drama. Change but the names, the ſwelling frog is a citizen turned eſquire; or, if you pleaſe, Cæſar, whoſe ambition proves his ruin; or the firſt man, who was degraded for having aſpired to be like unto God.

280. An Apologue, like other poems, muſt have an action. This action muſt be one, and intereſting; have a beginning, a middle, and an end; conſequently a prologue, a plot, and an unravelling; a place for the ſcenes; ſome actors, at leaſt two, or ſomething that may ſtand inſtead of a ſecond. Theſe actors are to have a character eſtabliſhed, maintained conſiſtently, and evinced by their ſpeeches and manners; and all this in imitation of human nature, of which animals are made the copiers, and act the parts of men, according to a certain analogy of characters.

281. The Apologue is not dramatic; we do not there ſee a wolf carrying off a lamb; it is only the recital of an allegorical action, commonly attributed to animals.

282. The eſſential qualities of a recital are brevi-

ty, perſpicuity, and probability. Brevity requires, that things be not too far fetched, and that the recital be finiſhed where it ought to end. This does not exclude little details, when they may have a good effect. The recital is perſpicuous, when each circumſtance is rightly placed, well timed, and the terms and the turns are proper, juſt, ſimple, without equivocation, without diſorder. In fine, probability reſults from a conjunction of the ſtrictures uſually found in truth, ſo that the time, the occaſion, the facility, the place, the diſpoſition of the actors, and their characters, ſeem to lead to the action; and that the whole be painted in a manner conſiſtent with nature, and the ideas of thoſe to whom we ſpeak.

283. Theſe three qualities are eſſential in all recitals, of whatever kind they may be. But, when our principal view is to pleaſe, there muſt be a fourth quality; and that is, to embelliſh with ornaments ſuitable to the ſubject.

284. Theſe ornaments conſiſt, 1. In the imagery, the deſcriptions, the portraits of places, perſons, and attitudes, 2. In the thoughts, when they are ſtriking by their extreme ſolidity, by their ſingularity, or by their ſmartneſs; 3. In the alluſions, when we introduce ſome ſtrokes, that make either a ſerious, or a burleſque figure, with what is recited; 4. In the turns, which ought to be lively and ſharp; and, 5 In the expreſſions, which are ſometimes bold, ſometimes copious, ſometimes brilliant,

285. The action of the fable muſt be ſingle, juſt, natural, and of a certain extent. Single, means that all its parts center in one point; and this, in the Apologue, is the moral. Juſt, is to ſignify directly, and with preciſion, what we intend to teach. Natural, means that it be founded in nature, or at leaſt on received opinion. Laſtly, it muſt have a certain extent, ſo that we may eaſily diſcern in it a beginning, a middle, and an end.

286. The truth reſulting from the allegorical recital in Apologues, is called the *moral*. It muſt be clear, conciſe and intereſting; there muſt be no metaphyſics, no laboured periods, nor too trivial truths in it.

287. The moral may be placed before and after the tale, according as taſte requires or permits. In both caſes the reader's mind is exerciſed, in combining each paſſage of the recital with truth; but in the ſecond, he has the additional pleaſure of gueſſing.

288. Fables are divided into three kinds; the *rational*, whoſe perſonages have the uſe of reaſon; the *moral*, wherein the perſons borrow the manners of men, without having the ſoul, which is the principle of it; and the *mixt*, where a rational being acts with another not endowed with reaſon.

289. The ſtile of fables muſt be ſimple, familiar, chearful, graceful, natural, and eſpecially artleſs. This laſt quality conſiſts in the choice of certain ſimple expreſſions, replete with an eaſy ſweetneſs,

which ſeem to ariſe of themſelves, rather than to be choſen; in ſuch compoſitions as are made, as it were by chance; and in certain youthful turns, which yet retain an air of the old mode.

290. It is impoſſible to tell at what time the Apologue had its origin. However, the uſe of it is certainly very ancient, and mankind without correſponding together, alike employed it in different parts of the world.

291. In the early ages, men having but a rude unpoliſhed language, too poor to furniſh them with all the expreſſions whoſe want they felt, they had recourſe, as far as they could, to ſome image, or compariſon. Now, compariſon is allied to allegory, and allegory is the ſame thing as Apologue.

292. It was natural to employ animals to repreſent men. They reſemble us in ſeveral reſpects. When we lend them reaſon and ſpeech, we liſten to them without partiality, becauſe they are not men. As they judge us without prejudice, we receive their deciſion without ſpurning at it. The artifice is not ſubtil, and yet men ſuffer themſelves to be caught by it.

XX.

Of the moſt celebrated FABULISTS.

293. Æſop, a Phrygian, is the firſt in this liſt. His hiſtory, ſuch as Planudes has given it, is a mere

romance: but the great reputation he has enjoyed in all times and in all places is extremely real.

294. Perſpicuity and preciſion conſtitute the character and merit of Æſop's Fables. Without deſpiſing ornaments, he prefers ſtrength and clearneſs to them, and intends that the truth he preſents be luminous of itſelf, ſo as to ſtrike the leaſt attentive minds: and, indeed, what few fables of his are left, are truly excellent.

295. Phædrus, Auguſtus's freed man, thought fable was a kind of compoſition ſuſceptible of graces and embelliſhments. In the collection he has left us, we diſcern the witty, delicate, graceful, poliſhed man, and one who endeavours to be ſo. He does not content himſelf with reciting, he paints, and frequently with one ſingle ſtroke. His expreſſions are well choſen, his thoughts judiciouſly arranged, and his verſification carefully laboured.

296 Since Phædrus, there are but few authors that have run the ſame race. Avienus, about the end of the laſt century, endeavoured to make fables in elegiac verſe; but he has neither the correctneſs of the Greek fabuliſt, nor the elegance of the Latin one.

297. To ſome critics, Æſop's ſimplicity appeared dry and irkſome; and the *elegance* of Phedrus had not that eaſy ſoftneſs, that graceful tenderneſs, which pleaſes the fancy, and commands attention. A man was ſtill wanting, expreſsly formed by nature, to add this part to the Apologue, and ren-

der it at the ſame time ſimple, elegant and genuine.

298. A man of this character was the celebrated John de la Fontaine. "Never, ſays the Abbé Olivet, never was any man more ſimple, but it was "that ingenuous ſimplicity, which is the portion "of infancy, or, more properly ſpeaking, he was "a child all his life. A child is ingenuous, credulous, ductile, without ambition, without gall. "He is not concerned about riches; he is not capable of ſticking long to one and the ſame object. He is in ſearch of pleaſure only, or rather "amuſement: and as to his manners, he ſuffers "himſelf to be guided by a glimmering light, that "partly diſcovers to him the law of nature. This "in every ſtroke is the character of Mr. de la Fontaine."

299. This fabuliſt raiſed the Apologue to its higheſt perfection. Theſe, who attempted to ſurpaſs him, have not been able to reach him, though they had great talents. The leaſt of his fables have a turn in them that will always baffle thoſe who were not born like him.

300. The fables of Mr. de la Motte are perhaps a work worſe treated by critics than any other ever has been: yet there is in all of them ſenſe and wit, and ſeveral are very eſtimable. La Fontaine did not trouble his head about inventing the ſubject; he contented himſelf with giving his own turn to thoſe we had already. Mr. de la Motte, having ſo

dangerous a rival to contend with, was willing in the firſt place, to ſecure to himſelf the merit of invention: the ſubſtance belongs to him as well as the form.

301. Among the fabuliſts of our days, we may diſtinguiſh Mr. Richer, whoſe collection is above the middling rank; and the Abbé Aubert, who is actually running in the ſame career with ſucceſs.

XXI.

Of PASTORAL POETRY.

302. Paſtoral poetry is an imitation of rural life, repreſented with all its poſſible charms. In this kind of compoſition, it is neceſſary to ſhew rural life itſelf, and only adorn it with ſuch graces as it is capable of receiving.

303. The name of *Eclogue* is alſo given to paſtoral pieces, from a Greek word that ſignifies a collection of choice pieces, no matter of what kind. This name has ſince been appropriated to little poems on rural life.

304. The name *Idyllium* has alſo been given to them, from another Greek word, which ſignifies a little image, a painting in the graceful and ſoft way. The difference between an *Idyllium* and an *Eclogue*, is very trifling: there is more action and emotion in the latter, and more imagery and ſentiment in the former.

305. The tranquillity of rural life, which is the

ſubject of an *Eclogue*, contains a proper number of incidents, perfect freedom, and pleaſing gaiety. It admits of moderate paſſions, that may produce complaints, ſongs, poetical conteſts, and intereſting recitals.

306 Paſtorals, properly ſpeaking, are a deſcription of the golden age, adapted to the capacities of men, and cleared of all the hyperbolical marvellous which poets had crouded into it.

307. All that happens in the country is not worthy a place in the *Eclogue*. We muſt take in more of it than what is of a nature to pleaſe or affect us.

308. Paſtoral poetry may not only be preſented under the form of recital, but alſo under all the forms that belong to poetry. Shepherds may have epic poems, tragedies, comedies, operas, elegies, eclogues, idyllia, epigrams, inſcriptions, allegories, funeral ſongs, etc.

309. Shepherds ought to be delicate and ingenuous; that is to ſay, in all their proceedings, and in all their ſpeeches, there muſt be nothing rude and diſagreeable, nor any thing too ſubtil and far-fetched. They muſt diſplay diſcernment, addreſs, and even wit, provided it be natural. They muſt be all morally as well as poetically good.

310. Hence indeed it happens, that their characters are nearly the ſame in the main, but yet they remain ſuſceptible of a great variety. From the mere tranquillity and innocent pleaſures, may

be ſtruck out all the paſſions, and they may be diverſified according to ages, ſexes, places, events, etc.

311. The ſtile of ſhepherds ſhould, 1. Be ſimple, *i. e.* that common expreſſions be uſed without affectation, without preparation, without an apparent deſign of pleaſing. 2. It muſt be gentle, have a certain ſoftneſs, mixed with delicacy, either in the thoughts, the turns, or the words. 3. Artleſs; (See Sect. 289.) 4. Be graceful in deſcriptions; 5. Have turns of phraſe, and compariſons, taken from objects familiar to ſhepherds; 6. Frequent repetitions and circumſtantial deſcriptions muſt be uſed; 7. Every thing, in ſhort, muſt be avoided that ſavours of ſtudy and application.

312. The *Eclogue* may however ſometimes ſoar. Shepherds may, if we pleaſe, have a bold imagination, and diſcourſe of the ſublimeſt things; but it muſt always be with a kind of timidity and ſimplicity. Theſe qualities, with eaſe and gaity, form the eſſential characteriſtic of paſtoral poetry.

313. The *Eclogue* muſt be almoſt as old as the world; but the origin of it is fixed in the days of the firſt paſtoral poet whoſe works had any reputation.

XXII.

Of the principal AUTHORS *in* PASTORAL.

314. The poet above hinted at, is Theocritus,

who lived about 270 years before Chriſt. In his Idyllia, he has painted nature genuine and graceful. We find in them abundance of paſſages from which may be formed the fineſt characters in paſtoral. Some of them might have been more delicate; but in moſt there is a ſweetneſs, an eaſe, to which none of his ſucceſſors could attain.

315. Moſchus and Bion appeared ſometime after Theocritus. From the ſmall number of pieces that remain of the former, it appears that he has added to the Eclogue, a certain art which it had not before, but it was a loſer in point of ſimplicity. Bion went farther; his Idyllia are ſtill more embelliſhed; we diſcover every where an endeavour, and ſometimes an affectation, to pleaſe.

316. Comparing then the characters of theſe three poets, it may be ſaid, that Theocritus painted ſimple, and ſometimes negligent, nature; that Moſchus diſplayed her with art; and that Bion ſet her off with ornaments,

317. Virgil is the only poet that excelled in this kind. He made Theocritus his model, and ſtuck ſo cloſe to him, that his Eclogues are ſcarce any thing but imitations of the Greek poet. They are the ſame ſubjects, the ſame turns, and frequently the ſame thoughts.

318. Horace, in drawing the character of Virgil's Eclogues in theſe verſes,

——————(*molle atque facetum*
Virgilio annuerunt gaudentes rure Camœnæ.

The Muſes, whom ſweet rural Paſtimes pleaſe,
Beſtow'd on Virgil elegance and eaſe.)

has given the perfect idea of the Eclogue, *i. e.* the rule by which all works may be tried that bear this name. Eaſe and elegance being eſſential qualities, the degree of their perfection conſiſts in their having more or leſs of each, or only one of theſe qualities; and the ſummit of perfection would be to bring them both to the higheſt point.

319. Calphurnius, and Nemeſianus, diſtinguiſhed themſelves in paſtoral poetry, under the reign of Diocleſian. They have now and then ſome graceful images and verſes happily turned; but they are deficient in that paſtoral rapture which inſpired the muſe of Theocritus, and in that eaſe which is the ſoul of Eclogue.

320. The Italians have given ſo new a character to the Eclogue, that it no longer appears among them like what it ſhould be. It ſparkles with witticiſms, abounds with quibbles, and is crouded with antitheſes. But, notwithſtanding all this, from the particular advantage of the Italian language, there is an acknowleged ſweetneſs in their Eclogues, and ſomething of that eaſe which appertains to paſtoral.

321. Ronſard's Eclogues do not deſerve to be mentioned: at leaſt we may confine ourſelves to what Deſpreaux has ſaid of them.

Ronſard continues ſtill the rural lay,
But ever tunes it in the Gothic way:

Without reſpect to ſenſe he never fails,
To change his ſwains to clowns, his nymphs to Abigails.

322. Honorat de Bueil, Marquis de Racan, a diſciple of Malherbe, reſtored in France the glory of the Eclogue. His genius was fertile and eaſy, his ſtile ſimple and delicate; conſequently he wanted nothing to make him a ſhepherd. Accordingly, we find again in him the ſpirit of Theocritus and Virgil; and there are ſome parts which may be compared to what is moſt delicate in theſe two poets.

323. Mr. de Segrais is looked upon as the moſt excellent model we have in paſtoral poetry.

In Segrais' Eclogues, lo, the foreſts dance.

324. Madam Deſhoulieres yields to none in this kind of compoſition. As ingenuous as Theocritus, as delicate as Virgil, and as witty as Bion; ſhe has of all theſe qualities made a happy mixture, which might perhaps have got the prize adjudged to her, had the ground-work of her ſubjects been more variegated; but they all ſeem to proceed from a certain mournfulneſs, which gives them a counterfeit air of elegy.

325. The ſhepherds of Mr. de Fontenelle are courtiers, who, in taking up the crook and the ſcrip, have not aſſumed the rural ſtile and the paſtoral ſpirit. They recite delicate and polite things very ingeniouſly; but all calculated for the mind, and nothing for the heart. So that it may be ſaid,

the Eclogues of this author belong to this ſpecies, only from the name he has given them.

XXIII.

Of LYRIC POETRY.

326. The other ſpecies of poetry which we have hitherto treated of, have actions for their principal object: Lyric poetry is entirely dedicated to ſentiment; which is its matter, its eſſential object. Sometimes it is guided by ſentiment, and then it ſlowly inſinuates itſelf, and warms without noiſe; ſometimes it is hurried away by ſentiment; and then it ſprings and ſoars with fiery impetuoſity.

327. Lyric Poetry is ſo called, becauſe it is generally deſigned to be ſung. In former days they did in effect ſing it, and the lyre accompanied the voices. The word *Ode* has the ſame origin: It ſignifies *Song* or *Hymn*.

328. Lyric poetry and muſic muſt therefore have an intimate connexion together, founded in the nature of things; ſince both are to expreſs the ſame objects. According to which, muſic being an expreſſion of the ſentiments of the heart by inarticulate ſounds, Muſical or Lyric Poetry muſt be the expreſſion of ſentiments by articulate ſounds or words.

329. After having defined Lyric Poetry to be that which expreſſes ſentiment, if we add to it a

form of verſification that may be ſung, it will have every thing it wants in order to be perfect.

330. From thence proceed the rules of this kind of poetry, as well as its privileges. It is this that authoriſes its bold beginnings, paſſionate expreſſions and excurſions. It is from thence it derives that ſublime which is peculiar to it, and that enthuſiaſm which approximates it to divinity.

331. The enthuſiaſm of artiſts in general is a lively ſentiment, produced by a bright idea, with which the artiſt himſelf is ſtruck. The poetical enthuſiaſm, or rapture, is ſo called, becauſe a ſoul poſſeſſed with it is entirely taken up with the object that inſpires it. The enthuſiaſm of the Lyric Poet is ſometimes ſublime, ſometimes eaſy and ſimple, but more frequently keeps in a certain medium between ſublimity and eaſe.

332. The *ſublime*, in general, is every thing that exalts us above what we were, and at the ſame time makes us ſenſible of that elevation. Sublime ſtile which conſiſts in a ſeries of noble ideas, nobly expreſſed, is out of the queſtion here: that which we ſpeak of is like a ſudden flaſh, which enlightens, or enflames.

333. We diſtinguiſh two ſorts of ſublimity; that of imagery, and that of ſentiment. Images are ſublime, when they raiſe our mind above all the ideas of grandeur it could poſſibly have. Sentiments are ſublime, when they ſeem to be almoſt above the condition of human nature.

334. We muſt not confound ſublimity of ſentiment with vivacity of ſentiment. A ſentiment may be extremely vivacious without being ſublime; and on the contrary, the ſublime ſentiment is void of vivacity, becauſe a great ſoul is not moved at what affects ordinary minds.

335. This is the generation of the lyrical ſublime. A great object ſtrikes the poet: his imagination ſoars and takes flame: it produces lively ſentiments, which in their turn act upon the imagination and further encreaſe its fire. Hence ariſe the greateſt efforts to expreſs the ſituation of the ſoul: hence the rich, nervous, bold periods, the extraordinary figures, and the ſingular turns. Such is the ſublime that belongs to the *Ode*, the ſublimity of the images, that which produces the lively ſentiment, and which the ſentiment re-produces and augments in its turn.

336. Sublimity of ſentiment has no paſſions, no exceſſive flights, ſtrong images, nor daring expreſſions; but all is tranquil and ſimple. It exiſts not in the ode, becauſe it is uſually connected with ſome action, and in odes there is no action. It is in the drama we chiefly find it. Corneille abounds with it.

337. It is eaſy to form an idea of the enthuſiaſm, which preſerves the medium between ſublimity and eaſe. It is that which produces what is called the ſublime ſtile, *i. e.* a chain of elevated thoughts, nervous and rich expreſſions, harmonious ſounds,

connected and bold turns, brilliant figures, and the poetic rapture uniformly and conſtantly ſuſtained.

338. The *beginning* of the ode is bold; becauſe when the poet takes his lyre in hand, we ſuppoſe him ſtrongly impreſſed with the objects he repreſents to himſelf. His imagination fires, and ſprings away with impetnoſity; conſequently it is hardly poſſible for an ode to ſoar higher than its beginning: but then the poet, if he has taſte, ought to ſtop preciſely at the place where it begins to ſink.

339. *Excurſions* in odes are a ſort of vacuity between two ideas that have no immediate connection. The mind's natural activity becomes incomparably greater when the ſoul is heated by paſſion: thus tranſport hurries away the thoughts with precipitation. And as it is impoſſible to expreſs them all, the poet ſeizes only the moſt remarkable, and delivering them in the ſame order as they are placed in his mind, without expreſſing thoſe that ſerved to combine them, they appear detached from the ſubject. But a ſenſible reader, when he has entered into the ſpirit of the poet, eaſily fills up theſe vacuities.

440. Excurſions, or flights, are allowable only in ſubjects that admit of ſtrong paſſions, becauſe they are the effect of a troubled mind, and anxiety is occaſioned only by important objects.

341. *Digreſſions* are ſallies made by the poet's mind on other ſubjects bordering on that which he

is handling, allured either by the beauty of the matter, or obliged by the ſterility of his ſubject, to ſeek elſewhere for ſomething to enrich it.

342. There are two ſorts of digreſſions; the one conſiſts in common-place obſervations, and general truths, often ſuſceptible of the greateſt poetical beauties: the other in paſſages of hiſtory or fable, which the poet employs to prove what he has in view.

343. Poetical *Irregularity* conſiſts in preſenting objects abruptly, without any preparation, or placing them in ſuch order as is not natural to them. This is an irregularity *of things*. There is alſo a diſorder *of words*, from whence certain turns ariſe, which, without being forced, appear extraordinary and irregular.

344. In general, excurſions, digreſſions, and irregularity, ſhould ſerve only to variegate, animate, and enrich the ſubject. If they render it obſcure, crowd and perplex it, they are bad.

345. Two conſequences reſult from the preceding obſervations. 1. An ode ought to be but of moderate length, agreeable to the obſervation of Cicero; *Animorum incendia celeriter reſtinguuntur.* 2. Unity of ſentiment muſt prevail in it, as unity of action does in the epopea and the drama.

346. There are four kinds of odes. 2. The *Sacred Ode*, which is a ſort of hymn or canticle, as thoſe of Moſes, and the prophets, and the pſalms of David. 2. *Heroic Odes*, ſo called from their be-

ing devoted to the glory of heroes. 3. *Moral*, or philoſophical *Odes*, where the poet, ſtricken with the charms of virtue, or the deformity of vice, gives a looſe to the ſentiments of love or hatred, which thoſe objects produce in him. 4. *Anacreontic Odes* which are the expreſſions of a joyous moment, and ſpring up in the midſt of pleaſures, as moſt of the French ſongs do.

347. The *Form* of odes is different, according to the taſte of the people where they are in uſe. The French have two ſorts of them: the firſt are thoſe that retain the generical name, and are not ſung; the others are called *Cantatas*, becauſe they are compoſed for ſinging.

348. In the firſt kind, the arrangements and the number of verſes is nearly at the option and diſpoſition of the poet: But, the firſt ſtrophe being once ſettled, it ſerves for a rule to all the reſt. In Cantatas we diſtinguiſh two parts, the Recitative and the Air. The Recitative begins, the Air follows: then another Recitative, after that another Air. The Recitative preſents the object to the mind, the Air expreſſes the ſenſation, which the ſight of the object ſhould excite. This produces two ſorts of muſic, and alſo two ſorts of poetry. The recitative is ſlower and more ſimple; the air is briſker and more animated.

349. It may be aſked, why muſic lying wholly in ſentiment, there is a ſpecies of lyric poetry which melts by its ſweetneſs, and another kind that, on

the contrary, requires all the force and energy imaginable? We anſwer, that the eaſy and ſimple ſentiment expreſſed by muſic, does not exclude nervous expreſſion; on the contrary it conduces to it. When a ſentiment is in its greateſt vivacity, it caſts off vulgar expreſſion; it ſpeaks by things rather than words, becauſe the latter are too feeble for it. Simplicity excludes nothing but what is too laboured, too ſtudied, or has only an hiſtorical dryneſs, as alſo witticiſms, epigrams, ſubtile tranſitions, ſyſtematical expreſſions. Accordingly, we find none of them in any truly lyric piece: but the moſt energical expreſſions may and ought to be found therein.

350 If Quinault's poetry, though lyric, is ſo eaſy and ſweet, it is 1. That this poet has ſung of nothing but diverſions, pleaſures and love, the foundation of which is ſloth and indolence: 2. That, in the works of Quinault, the greateſt part is in Recitativo.

351 In tracing the origin of lyric poetry, it may be ſaid that the firſt exclamation of man, coming out of the Creator's hands, was a lyrical expreſſion. Having afterwards diſcerned with more leiſure and leſs confuſion the bleſſings heaped on him, and the wonders which ſurrounded him, he wiſhed to have the whole univerſe concur with him in paying the tribute of glory he owed to the ſovereign benefactor.

352. As mankind multiplied, grateful nations

immortalized the benefits of God by ſongs, which by pious tradition were handed down to poſterity. Though the Heathens were miſtaken in the object of their worſhip, ſtill they had, in the foundation of their feſtivals, the ſame principle as the worſhippers of the true God.

353 The beneficent gods were at firſt the natural object of lyric poetry: Heroes, believed to be children of the gods, had afterwards naturally a ſhare in this kind of tribute: and this is what produced the firſt poems of the principal lyric authors, whoſe characters we are now proceeding to draw.

XXIV.

Of the moſt celebrated LYRIC POETS.

354. The name of Pindar is rather the name of enthuſiaſm itſelf, than that of a poet. Horace ſpeaks of Pindar in ſuch ſtrains of admiration, as prove the high opinion he had of him.

355. Pindar was born at Thebes, in Beotia, 500 years before Jeſus Chriſt. When Alexander deſtroyed that city, he ordered the houſe, in which this poet had dwelt, to be ſpared.

356. Several reaſons concur to make Pindar's odes appear obſcure and intricate. 1. The very grandeur of the ideas they contain. 2. The boldneſs of the turns. 3. The novelty of the words, which he often coins for the very place wherein he uſes them. 4. In fine, the erudition with which

he abounds; an erudition out of the common way, drawn from the particular hiſtory of certain families, and certain cities, which had but little ſhare in the known revolutions of ancient hiſtory.

357. Pindar has much fewer excurſions than is commonly thought. The glory of the heroes whom he celebrated, was not peculiar to the conquering hero: it belonged by full right to his family, and ſtill more to the place of which he was a citizen. So that when Pindar treated of ſubjects, in appearance foreign to that of his ode, it was not ſo much an excurſion of the poet as the effect of art.

358. There is in Boileau's works the diſpute between him and Mr. Perrault, about Pindar's odes. All the advantage remained with the former, and the glory of the lyric Greek poet was raiſed above all the attempts made to tarniſh it.

359. The names of ſome lyric authors, anterior to Pindar, are famous, but the works of moſt of them are loſt. Alcman was in high repute at Lacedemon, and Steſichorus in Sicily. Sappho was an honour to her ſex, and gave her name to the Sapphic verſe which ſhe invented. She was born in the iſle of Leſbos; as was alſo Alcæus, who flouriſhed in the ſame age, and was the inventor of the Alcaic verſe, which is the moſt majeſtic of the lyric kind.

360. Anacreon, of Teos, a city in Ioina, had made himſelf famous ſeveral centuries before. He

was cotemporary with Cyrus, and died in the 6th Olympiad, aged 83. We have a pretty good number of his pieces left, which all breathe nothing but pleaſure and amuſement. They are ſhort; and moſt frequently contain nothing but a graceful ſentiment, a delicate compliment allegorically turned: their graces are ſimple, ingenuous, negligent.

361. Anacreon's pieces are but very imperfectly rendered in the verſe tranſlations given of them by Meſſrs. de la Foſſe and de Longepierre. Madam Dacier's tranſlation, though in proſe, comes nearer to the original.

362. Horace, the firſt and the only Latin poet that perfectly ſucceeded in the ode, had thoroughly ſtudied all the Greek lyric writers; and, according to the ſubjects, he has all their great qualities; except that his compoſitions ſometimes ſavour of art, and that he is intent upon equalling his models.

363. We may apply to Horace's lyric ſtrains what he himſelf has ſaid of deſtiny, which he compares to a river, that ſometimes, gentle between its banks, runs on ſilently towards the ſea; and ſometimes, when torrents have ſwelled its ſtream, carries away rocks, trees, herds and houſes, making diſtant foreſts and mountains reſound with the roaring of its waters.

364. Malherbe is the firſt in France that produced the ode in its perfection. The preceding lyriſts had genius and fire enough; but they made a hotch potch of Latiniſms and Helleniſms, crude

and harſh, which they intermixed with witticiſms, puns, and rodomontades. Malherbe reduced every thing to the rules of duty; he was for ſpeaking plainly, correctly, and decently; he made the verſification graceful; in ſhort, he was the father of good taſte in our poetry; and his laws, derived from good ſenſe and nature, ſtill ſerve for rules, as Deſpreaux has obſerved, even to the authors of our days.

365. Racan alſo wrote ſome odes, the form of which is pleaſant, flowing and eaſy: nature alone was his guide; but the materials are not ſo well combined, as in Malherbe's odes: and as he did not ſtudy the ſources, there is not always in the chief part enough of that weight which gives conſiſtency.

366. In our days aroſe the celebrated Rouſſeau, who, by the energy of his ſtile, the beauty of his verſification, the vigour of his thoughts, has almoſt made us forget the ancients, who are forſaken, eſpecially by thoſe whoſe delicacy cannot endure antiquated words. Rouſſeau is admirable in his verſification; his ſtile is ſublime, and perfectly well ſuſtained; his thoughts are well connected; he carries on his ſtrain with the ſame force from the beginning to the end.

367. Yet he is not without faults, even in his beſt pieces; for thoſe of his later years are much inferior to the others. He has not always enough of that flexibility, that ſuppleneſs, which gives a grace,

and makes the members play with eaſe. We cannot paſs a more ſolid judgment on Rouſſeau's poetry than the Duke de Nivernois has done in an excellent piece of criticiſm of his compoſing, which is inſerted in ſeveral collections*.

368. Sacred lyric is infinitely above all the prophane compoſitions of this kind. David may ſtand us inſtead of the Greeks and all the Latins. It is in his Pſalms that we find the ideal beauty of the ode realized: the ſublime, the eaſy, the vehement, every thing is there in the higheſt perfection. What would it be, if we could perfectly reliſh it, and in the original tongue, which of all languages is the moſt energetical.

XXV.

Of ELEGY.

369. Elegy is devoted to the emotions of the heart, and may be conſidered as dependent on the ode. Theſe two kinds of poetry have the ſame matter, but with this difference only, that the ode extends to ſentiments of all kinds and all degrees, whereas Elegy is confined to tender ſenſations.

370. Among the Latins, the name of Elegy related to the form of the poem as well as to the ſubject matter. They called an *Elegiac poem*, that which was in hexameter and pentameter verſes intermixed. With us, as there is no particular form for this ſpecies of poetry, it is diſtinguiſhed only by

* It is inſerted in the *Bee of Parnaſſus*, Tome IV. Page 277, *etc.*

the nature of the ſenſation expreſſed in it, and this ſenſation is confined to grief.

371. Elegy muſt have its hair diſheviled, it muſt be negligent, in mourning garments, ſorrowful and lamenting. It is difficult enough to meet with good elegies in French: moſt of them are either inſipid and languid, or in a ſtile too laboured and affected. Madam Deſhouliers, and the Counteſs de la Suze, hold the firſt rank in this ſpecies of poetry.

372. Of the Greek Elegies we have none left but that in the Andromache of Euripides: but we ſtill have thoſe of Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid, who were famous in this way among the Latins. Tibullus is natural, eaſy and elegant. Propertius is more ſtiff, or even a little harſh, becauſe he is too learned. As to Ovid, we know his fault is having too much wit, and ſuppoſing his reader has too little. He ſays all that can be ſaid, and therefor ſays too much.

XXVI.

Of DIDACTIC POETRY.

373. The poetry which we have hitherto ſeen reigning in fiction, as in its own domain, changes the object in Didactic Poetry. Its deſign is to inſtruct, to trace the laws of reaſon and good ſenſe, to guide the arts, to adorn and embelliſh truth, without encroaching in the leaſt upon its prerogative.

374. This compoſition is a kind of uſurpation made by poetry on proſe, whoſe natural ſcope is inſtruction; for, as proſe is more free in its expreſſions and turns, and is not fettered by poetical harmony, it can more eaſily deliver ideas clearly, and conſequently convey them, juſt as they are, to the minds of thoſe we inſtruct.

375. Men, who were poſſeſſed both of knowlege and the talent of verſification, attempted to clothe with poetical expreſſions and graces, matters purely doctrinal. Hence proceeded Heſiod's Tracts on Huſbandry, the Sentences of Theogenes, the Theraupeutic of Nicander, Oppian's Hunting and Fiſhing, Lucretius's poem on nature, Virgil's Georgics, etc.

376. In all theſe works there is nothing poetical but the form: fiction does not furniſh the matter, it is truth itſelf that ſpeaks. The pure Didactic is *Truth thrown into Verſe*. The pure Poetic is *Fiction clothed in Verſe*.

377. Between theſe two extremes, there are abundance of mediums, in which fiction and truth are blended, and mutually aſſiſt each other; and the works included in them are either poetical, or didactical, more or leſs, according as they contain more or leſs fiction or truth.

378. There are as many ſpecies of Didactic Poetry, as there are different kinds of truth.

379. We may entitle thoſe Hiſtorical Poems which relate nothing but real actions and events, juſt as

they happened in the natural courſe, without arranging their parts according to the rules of art, and without riſing higher than the natural cauſes. Such are the fifty books of Nonnus on the life and exploits of Bacchus, Lucan's Pharſalia, Silius Italicus's Punic War, and ſome others.

380. Philoſophical Poems are thoſe which conſiſt in eſtabliſhing principles, either phyſical, moral, or metaphyſical. In theſe, the authors quote authorities and examples, and draw conſequences. Such are Lucretius's poem, Cardinal Polignac's Anti Lucretius, Pope's Eſſay on Man, etc.

381. In fine, we ſimply call Didactic Poems thoſe that contain nothing but obſervations relative to practice, precepts for regulating ſome operation whoſe ſucceſs is to be ſecured by precautions. There are excellent ones of this kind, ſuch as Virgil's Georgics, Father Vaniere's Rural Life, Father Rapin's Gardens, Horace's Art of Poetry, Vida, Boileau, etc.

382. Theſe three ſpecies of poems are not ſo diſtinct but that they ſometimes mutually aſſiſt each other. In the philoſophical poem we often find hiſtorical facts, and obſervations derived from the arts; and hiſtorical and didactic poems reciprocally admit ratiocinations and principles. But theſe mutual aids do not conſtitute the foundation of the ſpecies.

384. Didactic Poems, like other works, have a beginning, a middle, and an end: the ſubject is pro-

poſed, treated on, and finiſhed. Hiſtorical poems have actions, paſſions, and actors, as well as that of the fictitious kind: but philoſophical and practical poems have none. Thoſe warm the heart; theſe enlighten the mind, or direct the acting faculties.

385. Didactic poets, in imitation of the others, invoke deities; and ſuppoſing themſelves to be heard, they aſſume the tone of inſpired men. On this ſuppoſition all the rules of the Didactic poem are founded, with reſpect to the form.

386. Theſe rules are general or particular. The firſt may be reduced to three. 1. To conceal order to a certain degree. The poet ſeems to give ſcope to his genius, without regarding the laws of method: yet the irregularity he allows himſelf, concerns only the little parts; in the great ones he neceſſarily follows the natural order. 2. To introduce things foreign to his ſubject, in order to adorn it and keep up the reader's attention. Such are the Epiſodes, which we have already mentioned. 3. To arrogate to himſelf all the privileges of the poetical ſtile, metaphors, epithets, bold turns, licentious conſtructions, figures of ſpeech and thought.

387. In general, Didactic poets uſe all the means they imagine fit to perſuade their readers, that an intelligence more than human ſpeaks to them, in order thereby to amaze the mind, and command attention. Horace's Art of Poetry, though written with the greateſt ſimplicity, is not againſt this principle. The poet begins in an elevated ſtrain, and

delivers his precepts like an interpreter of the gods.

388. Beſides theſe general rules, Didactic Poetry has particular ones, which are analogous to its different kinds. An hiſtorical poem has the right of giving the ſtrokes with more vivacity, making them bolder, and more luminous: a Divine Being is ſuppoſed to be the painter. A philoſophical poem muſt tend principally to inſtruction, which is the aim of the ſciences: therefor, method muſt be more perceptible in it than in other poems; and it is leſs allowable to throw in digreſſions which would prevent our following the thread of ratiocination. In fine, in poems that contain precepts, it is brevity that chiefly pleaſes and ſtrikes the mind.

XXVII.

Of SATIRE.

389. Satire has not always had the ſame foundation, nor the ſame form in all times. It has been different among the Greeks and among the Romans; with the latter it has been ſubject to ſuch ſingular changes, that it is almoſt impoſſible to follow it in all its variations,

390. Among the Greeks, it was an exhibition that kept a ſort of medium between tragedy and comedy. It was characterized by its actors. They were neither heroes, nor gods, nor men: they employed ſuch perſonages as a Polyphemus, a Siſyphus, etc. Of this kind of drama we have nothing left but the Cyclops of Euripides.

391. Satire was brought to Rome by the Tuſcans; and it was then nothing elſe but a ſort of ſong in dialogue, the whole merit of which conſiſted in the ſtrength and vivacity of the repartees. It is ſaid they were called Satires, from the Latin word *ſatura*, which ſignified a baſon wherein they put all ſorts of fruits, and offered them to the gods at once.

392. Livius Andronicus, Ennius, Pacuvius, and Varro, introduced divers modifications in Satire. The latter gave it the ſurname of *Menippea*, on account of the reſemblance he gave it to the ſatires of Menippus, a Greek philoſopher. It was a medley of verſe and proſe.

393. At laſt Lucilius fixed the ſtandard of this poem, and preſented it in the form which Horace, Perſius, and Juvenal, have given it to us, and ſuch as we now ſee it in. At that time the word Satire was applied only to the medley of matter, and not to that of forms. Satires really became a confuſed heap of invectives againſt mankind, againſt their deſires, their fears, their violent paſſions, their ſilly pleaſures, their intrigues*.

394. Satire may then be defined, to be a poem in which the vices of men are directly attacked: yet, properly ſpeaking, it is only a diſcourſe cloathed in verſe. If it is required, that the ſubject matter in a poetical work be created, feigned, imagined by the poet, Satire is not a poem in the man-

* *Quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,*
Gaudia, diſcurſus, noſtri eſt farrago libelli. Juven. Sat. I.

ner of the Apologue, Eclogue, Comedy, Tragedy, or Epopea.

395. Satire differs from comedy, in that it attacks them only obliquely.

396. As there are two ſorts of vices, ſome greater, others leſs, there are alſo two ſorts of Satire; the one appears ſomething like tragedy, as Juvenal's; the other, as that of Horace, reſembles comedy.

397. Several ſorts of ſeaſoning may prevail in Satire; the bitter, the dry, the ſour, or the ſalt; and the latter is more or leſs pungent.

398. The ſpirit that commonly animates the ſatiriſt, is not that of a philoſopher, who, without emerging from his tranquillity, paints the charms of virtue, and the deformity of vice; nor that of an orator, who, replete with noble zeal, would reform men and bring them back to righteouſneſs; nor that of a poet, who intends only to make himſelf admired, by exciting terror and pity; nor that of a miſanthropiſt, who hates mankind too much to deſire to make them better.

399. The ſatiriſt ſeems to cloak himſelf with a concern for virtue, that he may have the pleaſure of laſhing vice. In this ſentiment there is a mixture of virtue and malignity, hatred of vice, and at leaſt ſome contempt of mankind, a deſire to be revenged, and a ſort of chagrin for not being able to do it but by words. Such is the idea that ſeems to reſult from the works in which the ſatirical character is moſt conſpicuous.

400. Again, Satire differs from criticiſm, in that the object of the latter is only to preſerve in purity the ideas of what is good and true, in works of wit and taſte, without any regard to the author, without meddling with his talents, or touching upon any thing that is perſonal: whereas Satire ſeeks to ſting the man himſelf, and conceals the ſtroke in ſome ingenious turn, only to procure the reader the pleaſure of ſeeming to approve nothing but the wit.

401. Though theſe ſorts of works are of a blameable character, yet they may be read with advantage. We find ſome excellent principles in them to form the manners, and ſtriking portraits which awaken the mind. But, in peruſing them, we muſt be upon our guard, and preſerve ourſelves from the contagious ſpirit of the poet, which would render us malignant, and make us loſe a virtue on which our own happineſs and that of others in ſociety depend

402. The form of Satire is in itſelf quite indifferent. Sometimes it is of the epic kind, ſometimes of the dramatic, but moſt frequently didactic. Sometimes it bears the name of a diſcourſe, at other times it is called an epiſtle. All theſe forms alter not the nature of the ſubject-matter, when the ſpirit of invective has dictated it.

XXVIII.

Of the principal SATIRICAL POETS.

403. Caius Lucilius, born at Aurunca, a city of Italy, of an illuſtrious family, turned his poeti-

cal talent to ſatire, and declared himſelf a ſworn enemy to vice. He compoſed more than thirty books of ſatires, of which there are only a few fragments left. To judge from what Horace ſays of them, we need not much regret this loſs. His ſtile is prolix and languid, his verſes are unpoliſhed: however, Quintilian has judged more favourably of him. And we muſt add, that this poet lived at the time when literature had but juſt received its birth in Italy.

404. Horace profited by the advantage he had of being born in the fineſt age of Latin literarure. He produçed ſatire with all the graces it could receive, ſeaſoning it no more than was neceſſary for pleaſing delicate minds, and rendering knaves and fools deſpicable.

405. Horace's ſatires ſcarce offer any thing but the ſentiments of a polite man, of a philoſopher formed by converſation with the great world, who beholds with concern the irregularities of mankind, and ſometimes diverts himſelf with them. They moſt frequently preſent nothing but general pictures of human life: and if now and then they give particular details, it is not ſo much with a deſign to offend any body, as to enliven the matter, and as it were, to put the moral into action.

406, The title which Horace gave to his ſatires and epiſtles ſufficiently denote their character. He called them *Sermones*, diſcourſes, converſations, reflections made amongſt friends, on the life and cha-

racters of men. His ſtile is ſimple, eaſy, lively, always moderate and calm: and as to ſimplicity, there is nothing better done nor more finiſhed.

407. Perſius was born at Volaterræ, a city of Hetruria, of a noble houſe, and allied to the greateſt families of Rome. He died at the age of thirty, in the eighth year of Nero's reign. There are noble ſentiments in his ſatires; but the ſtile is vehement, and rendered too obſcure by laboured allegories, frequent ellipſes, and too bold metaphors.

408. This poet is extremely grave; he is even a little melancholy; and whether it be owing to the vigour of his genius, or his zeal for truth, there ſeems to be in his philoſophy a little ſourneſs and animoſity againſt thoſe whom he attacks.

409. Notwithſtanding all this, Perſius, in compariſon of Juvenal, is almoſt frigid. The latter is warm to exceſs. Hyperbole is his favourite figure. He had an extraordinary ſtrength of genius, and an impetuoſity of temper, which alone might have almoſt ſufficed to make him a poet. This is not the ſatire of Horace, who humorouſly trifles; nor that of Perſius, who argues: it is ſatire armed with a ſword, and fuming with rage. The ſame ſtrain is kept up throughout in Juvenal; it is not enough for him to paint; he engraves deeply, he cauterizes.

410. Maturin Regnier, a native of Chartres, and nephew of Deſportes, a poet of the ſixteenth century, was the firſt in France who wrote ſatires. There

is a delicacy and an happy turn in thoſe that he carefully finiſhed; his verſes are eaſy and flowing. Happy

Had he but wrote his Cynic rhymes with care,
And not ſo oft alarm'd the modeſt ear.

411. Regnier often loſes ſight of dignity in expreſſions, in thoughts, and even in things. He is ſometimes tedious and prolix. His imitations are too far ſtretched, and almoſt always inferior to his models.

412. Nicholas Boileau Deſpreaux, who came ſixty years after Regnier, was more cautious, and conſidered decency as a virtue in writing, as well as in manners. His verſes are nervous, finiſhed, harmonious, and full of matter. He is cloſe, accurate, decent, careful every where, ſuffering nothing uſeleſs nor obſcure. His expreſſions are always juſt, frequently rich and bold; his turns are eaſy and lively: there is neither vacuity nor ſuperfluity.

413. Boileau's plan of ſatire was to attack vice in general, and bad authors in particular. He ſeldom names a villain, but he does not boggle at naming a bad author that diſpleaſes him, to ſerve as an example to others, and to maintain the prerogatives of good ſenſe and good taſte.

414. Moſt of Boileau's verſes are ſo fine that they are become proverbs: they ſeem born rather than made.

415. Boileau's Art of Poetry is a maſter-piece of

reaſon, taſte and verſification. All his verſes are like ſo many oracles of good ſenſe, delivered with all poſſible clearneſs and ſtrength. The Lutrin is a work entirely of genius; a caſtle in the air, ſupported only by the art and ſtrength of the architect. We behold in it the genius that creates, the judgment which arranges, the imagination that enriches, the ſtrain that animates the whole, and the harmony which diffuſes graces. His Satires and the Epiſtles abound with wit, vivacity, and original ſtrokes.

416. If we examine the characters of the principal ſatirical authors, in order to ſee wherein they reſemble each other, and in what they differ, it appears that Horace and Boileau have more reſemblance between them, than either of them has with Juvenal. They both lived in a polite age, wherein taſte was pure, and the idea of the beautiful unmixed. On the contrary, Juvenal lived in the decline of Latin literature, when people judged of the goodneſs of a work by its richneſs, rather than by the œconomy of the ornaments. As to Perſius, he has a character peculiar to himſelf, which ſympathizes with nobody.

XXIX.

Of EPISTOLATORY POETRY.

417. An Epiſtle in Verſe is nothing but a letter addreſſed to any perſon. It has its rules as a letter,

and they are thoſe of the Epiſtolary ſtile, of which we ſhall ſpeak hereafter. The rules it may have as a letter in verſe, are all reducible to this; that it muſt at leaſt have a certain degree of either ſtrength or elegance; in a word, a degree of care above what would have been beſtowed on it in writing it only in proſe.

418. The matter of ſuch epiſtles is of an unlimited extent. One may employ it in praiſing, blaming, reciting, philoſophizing, teaching, etc. Nor is it more confined with regard to the tones of ſtile it may aſſume. All thoſe in uſe ſuit it; becauſe its diction falls or riſes, according to the matter, or the condition of the perſon who writes, or to whom it is addreſſed. Beſides, the ſame epiſtle admits all ſorts of tones, at leaſt all that relate to the matter.

419. An Epiſtle in Verſe is begun and ended without preparation; and the title prefixed to it, is like a notice to the reader, to judge of the work only as he would judge of a letter.

XXX.

Of the EPIGRAM.

420. An Epigram was formerly the very thing that we now call an *Inſcription*. It was engraved on the frontiſpieces of temples, on monuments, public edifices, etc. Such as were placed upon tombs, they called *Epitaphs*, from the Greek name of a monument, whereon they were engraved. In our

days, the word Epigram ſignifies an intereſting thought, happily and conciſely preſented in verſe.

421. The *Anthology*, or Collection of Greek Epigrams, might enable us to form a judgment of the antique taſte, provided we now knew all that ought to be known, in order to judge of it with certainty. It appears that the Greeks did not ſtudy for witty conceits, which, doubtleſs, proceeded not from want of wit, but becauſe they held them not in eſteem.

422. The Latins have alſo their Epigrammatiſts. Catullus made a pretty good number of Epigrams, which are happily turned, but are not genteel and decent. Martial, more lively, more vigorous, more conciſe, has given a collection of Epigrams, which agrees with the judgment he himſelf has paſſed on it*.

423. We have ſcarce any French poets, but what have made ſome Epigrams. We eſteem thoſe of Gonbaud, St. Gelais, and Marot, for their ſimplicity. Thoſe of the Chevalier de Cailly are reckoned the beſt.

424. The Epigram riſes to what is moſt noble in every kind, and ſtoops to the minuteſt things. Yet ſimplicity, or mediocrity, better agree with it than the exalted kind, became its characteriſtic is freedom and eaſe.

425. There are two parts in an Epigram: the

* *Sunt bona; ſunt quædam mediocria; ſunt mala plura.*

expoſition of the ſubject which brings on the thought; and the thought itſelf, or the point. The expoſition ought to be ſimple, eaſy and clear; and the thought ſhould be lively in itſelf, and by the manner of turning it.

426. Epigrams that have no wit but pun or equivocation, are now leaſt eſteemed of any, either becauſe they are eaſily made, or from their reſembling buffoonery, or, in fine, becauſe they denote a mind intent upon ſeeking too trivial affinities between the ſounds and the different acceptations of words.

427. An untrue thought is one of the greateſt defects that can be found in an Epigram: it leaves in the mind a certain inſipidity mixed with ill-nature. However, if the falſity is recompenſed by ſomething agreeable, the thought, though not true, may paſs for a witty jeſt, and pleaſe as much as truth.

428. There is ſcarce any ſpecies of poetry that has more of the bad in it than this, becauſe it requires genius, wit, and eſpecially a certain turn of mind beſtowed on very few perſons.

XXXI.

Of the MADRIGAL, *the* SONNET, *the* RONDEAU, *and the* TRIOLET.

429. Theſe four ſpecies of little poems are uſually analogous with the Epigram, becauſe they have this in common with it, of being only one intereſt-

ing thought happily preſented. The only difference that characterizes them, is the very nature of the thought, or the arrangement of the verſe.

430. Madrigal is diſtinguiſhed by the character of the thought. It has a point; but this point is always gentle, graceful, and has nothing ſtinging in it, but what is needful to prevent its being inſipid. Its ſimplicity is rather in the turn itſelf than in the thought, which always has a certain ſpice of wit.

431. The *Sonnet* is a poem of fourteen verſes which requires ſo many qualities, that ſcarce in a thouſand can we find two or three that deſerve praiſe. Its artificial form conſiſts in the arrangement and the quality of the rhymes; and Boileau has very happily expreſſed it, in ſaying

It ever is Apollo's greateſt pleaſure,
That in two Stanza's of the four-lin'd meaſure,
Two ſouuds be form'd with ſuch poetic care,
To ſtrike eight times, harmoniouſly, the ear;
Then in ſix verſes arfully diſplay'd,
The ſenſe ſhould in two Triplets be convey'd.

432. The character of the Rondeau is ſimplicity. It admits of the Gauliſh turns, which ſeems yet to retain that blunt and frank air which characterized our anceſtors. The Rondeau is compoſed of thirteen verſes with two refrets, or burdens. The verſes conſiſt of two ſort of rhymes, eight maſculine and five feminine, or ſeven maſculine and ſix feminine. The firſt refret is after the 8th verſe, and

the ſecond after the thirteenth: beſides which, there is a neceſſary pauſe after the fifth verſe. The refret ſhould always be linked with the preceding thought, and terminate its ſenſe in a natural way; and it pleaſes, eſpecially, when in repreſenting the ſame words, it preſents ideas ſomewhat different.

433. The *Triolet* (verſes of three ſtanzas) is a ſpecies of the Rondeau, whoſe beauty conſiſts in the return of the ſame verſes, to form a ſet of new ſentiments.

XXXII.

Of WORKS *in* PROSE.

434 Though the language of proſe did certainly precede that of poetry, it was not an inverſion of order, to begin with a diſquiſition of the latter. In order to learn how to judge in matters of literature, we muſt at firſt employ ourſelves on works, where the beauties and the defects, being more ſenſible, gave alſo more opportunities of exerciſing the taſte and the underſtanding, and where art openly ſhews itſelf.

435. When once we have well diſcerned this art, ſuch as it is, and are very ſure of having ſeized its true principles, we endeavour to diſcover it in the works where it uſually conceals itſelf. This order is the very order of the human mind, which makes things we are ſenſible of, a means to come at thoſe that are not ſo.

436. The ordinary language, that of neceſſity only, has preceded all other modes of ſpeech. It is the moſt eſſential inſtrument of ſociety; and mankind directed its firſt cares towards the needful. On the contrary, the oratorial language, where all the reſources of art are joined to natural genius, was not brought under formal rules, 'till after the great ſucceſſes of poetry, by whoſe example eloquence became ſenſible that there were means to preſent objects in a way fit to ſeduce the ear, and warm the heart.

437. Homer was looked upon not only as the prince of poetry, but alſo as the father of eloquence, hiſtory, philoſophy, and all the arts The care he took to follow nature ſcrupulouſly, even in the midſt of his actions and fictions, made hiſtorians and orators feel what they ought to do, eſpecially in painting truth.

438. Poetry and eloquence differ, both by the end they propoſe, and the means they uſe to attain its end. The object of eloquence is to inſtruct; and if it deigns to pleaſe, it is from a knowlege that this is the ſureſt way to perſuade.

439. Rhetoric, Logic, and Grammar, are three arts that ſhould always walk hand in hand. The firſt is the art of ſpeaking eloquently, the ſecond that of thinking well, and the third that of ſpeaking with propriety.

440. Speaking eloquently, is to diſcourſe in ſuch a manner as may obtain a hearing, and to perſuade

the hearers. Thinking well, is to render our ideas preciſe and clear, to be circumſpect in our judgment, and coherent and accurate in our arguments. Speaking with propriety, is to make uſe of received terms and lawful conſtructions

441. Theſe are the three univerſal inſtruments, the uſe of which extends to all ſpecies of writing in the ſciences and in literature; and which, in thoſe that poſſeſs them all, denote a good education, rectitude of mind, and fertility of genius

XXXIII.

Of ORATIONS.

442. The word *Oration* according to its etymology, and in the ſenſe wherein Grammarians uſe it, denotes every thought expreſſed in diſcourſe. We reſtrain it here to every diſcourſe prepared with art to work perſuaſion.

443. There is a great difference between the talent of oration, and the art that helps to form it. The talent is called *Eloquence*, the art is *Rhetoric*: the one produces, the other judges; the one forms the orator, the other what is called the rhetorician.

444. We commonly reduce to three kinds all queſtions in which perſuaſion may take place, and which belong to eloquence. They are called the *demonſtrative* kind, the *deliberative* kind, and the *judicial* kind.

445. The principal object of the firſt, is the preſent time; the ſecond, futurity; the third, the time paſt. In the demonſtrative we praiſe, or blame. In the deliberative, we induce to act, or not to act. In the judicial, we accuſe or defend.

XXXIV.

Of the DEMONSTRATIVE KIND.

446. The Demonſtrative Kind includes panegyrics, funeral orations, academical diſcourſes, compliments made to kings, princes, etc On theſe occaſions, every thing muſt be collected that may do honour and give pleaſure to the perſon we praiſe.

447. An orator, when he intends to honour his hero too much, ſhould beware of diſhonouring himſelf. If his proofs are ill choſen, if he draws from the ſources of flattery, rather than from the fountain of truth, the auditor grows angry at his attempting to make him an accomplice in his meanneſs.

448. Panegyrics are a very difficult compoſition. It is a ſort of triumph granted to virtue. But ſometimes virtues are not pure enough to deſerve that honour; ſometimes he that undertakes this taſk, has not the talents requiſite for executing it well.

XXXV.

Of the DELIBERATIVE KIND.

449. Here we are not confined to the praiſing of virtue; we ſhew the reaſons that ſhould induce us to embrace it. To ſucceed in this, a man muſt be maſter of his ſubject, and attentively conſider all its parts, not only real but poſſible.

450. When the buſineſs is to examine whether an enterprize be uſeful or not, we muſt carefully calculate the *pro* and *con* of the probabilities, without omitting any of the circumſtances that may have place in ſuch a calculation. This ſuppoſes a ſolid and diſintereſted mind.

451. The buſineſs here is not to make a parade of graces, to tickle the ear, and flatter the imagination: the whole conſiſts only in repreſenting things with energy and ſimplicity. Such is the eloquence of Demoſthenes; if he is rich and pompous, it is merely by the ſtrength of his good ſenſe.

XXXVI.

Of the JUDICIAL KIND.

452. The object of queſtions of this kind is fact, right, or title; and it always turn upon ſome wrong, either real, or pretended to be real. Wrong may be defined, a free action that deprives a man of ſomething which he lawfully poſſeſſes.

453. If there were no legal rights, no wrongs could be done. If there was no liberty, there would be no real crime.

454. We diſtinguiſh two ſorts of right; one natural, engraved on the hearts of all men; the other civil, which obliges all the citizens of the ſame community or the ſame republic, to do, or not to do, certains things for the common intereſt. Thoſe that violate the civil law, are bad citizens: thoſe that violate the natural law, offend human nature.

455. The orator makes the beſt of the authority of the laws; and he excites attention, when he ſhews that the common intereſt has been injured by the action for which he demands juſtice.

456. The three kinds we have juſt mentioned, are not ſo ſeparated from each other as never to be unitable. Very far from it; the contrary happens in almoſt all diſcourſes, becauſe honeſty, utility, and equity, commonly center in the ſame point.

457. Whatever ſubject the orator handles, he neceſſarily has three functions to perform: the firſt is to ſearch out the objects he is to diſcourſe of; the ſecond, to put them in proper order; the third, to expreſs them decently. This we call *invention*, *diſpoſition*, *expreſſion*; and theſe three operations are found in all the arts.

XXXVII.

Of INVENTION.

458. The orator's object is to perſuade. To ſucceed in this, he muſt prove, pleaſe, and touch the paſſions. Sometimes one of theſe means alone is ſufficient; and ſometimes all three are not too much. We prove by arguments; we pleaſe by manners; we affect by the paſſions.

459. Logic teaches the art of forming arguments. In works of taſte this form is not obſerved. The oratorial ſyllogiſm commonly preſents the propoſition to be proved, before expreſſing the reaſon that proves it. It alſo takes in other propoſitions, which ſerve as proofs to the major and minor. This is what made the philoſopher Zeno compare philoſophic argument to a clenched fiſt, and oratorial argument to an open hand.

460. The ancients, who were for making an art of every thing, made one for *Invention*. They called *Common-Places*, all the repertories or magazines, that contain every treaſure which is the object of invention.

461. The firſt of thoſe places is *definition*, by which the orator finds in the nature of the very thing he ſpeaks of, a reaſon to perſuade us that what he ſays of it is right. Oratorial definition is very different from philoſophical definition: pro-

perly ſpeaking, it is an enumeration of parts, which leads to a concluſion with reſpect to the whole.

462. *Etymology*, and *Homonymy*, afford us no great reſources; and a good cauſe is often hurt by defending it with ſuch weapons.

463. The *Genus* and the *Species* lead to valid concluſions, by deſcending from the firſt to the ſecond, or aſcending from the ſecond to the firſt.

464. *Similitude* ſcarcely differs from compariſon, and *Diſſimilitude* is confounded with contraries.

465. *Contraries* are of great uſe: it is often the beſt way of exhibiting a thought. By telling at firſt what a thing is not, the mind of the hearer is put in action, and he endeavours himſelf to find what it is.

466. Things *repugnant* ſerve to prove the impoſſibility of a fact.

467. *Circumſtances* are of great weight in proofs. Sometimes they are heaped together, as it were to bear down the hearer by their number.

468. *Antecedents* and *Conſequents* are the things that precede or follow a fact, and lead to the knowlege of it.

469. In fine, in conſidering the *Cauſe* and the *Effects*, we blame or praiſe an action, we adviſe an enterprize, or diſſuade from it.

470. All theſe common places are called *internals*, becauſe they are relative to the ſubject itſelf, and are, as it may be ſaid, extracted from the bowels of the cauſe. To theſe we join *exterior* places,

which are ſix in number; the *Law*, the *Title*, *Common Report*, the *Oath*, the *Queſtion*, the *Witneſſes*; means all placed out of the cauſe, and without which, taking them all ſeparately, a cauſe may ſubſiſt. The neceſſary details on this ſubject are to be found in the treatiſes of rhetoric.

471. After having proved, the author ſtudies to pleaſe, and it is by *Manners* that he gradually inſinuates himſelf: he prepares mens minds, and ſubdues them with their own conſent.

472. By *Manners* in eloquence, we mean virtue, and the orator's virtue, which the Heathens defined *Vir bonus dicendi peritus*. We would have him to be an honeſt man, and that his whole diſcourſe ſhould bear the ſtamp of probity.

473. To probity we muſt add modeſty. Nothing is more offenſive to an audience than the pride of the ſpeaker: and, in general, modeſty is characteriſtic of true learning, as well as of true merit.

474. To the foregoing qualities the orator muſt add benevolence, or rather zeal for the good of the audience. All men are prone to believe what their friends tell them.

475. Prudence is a fourth quality, which neceſſarily implies knowlege. It is required of the orator, becauſe it would be of no uſe to be guided by an honeſt man, or a ſincere friend, if he himſelf was ignorant of the road.

476. The orator who has eſtabliſhed his authority on theſe four virtues, and diſplays them in all

his diſcourſes, perfectly gains the confidence of his audience, and draws them after him rather than perſuades them.

477. The third mean to attain the ſame end, is to apply to the *paſſions*: a dangerous inſtrument when not rationally managed: but more efficacious than reaſon itſelf, when it accompanies and ſerves it. It is by the paſſions that eloquence triumphs, and reigns over the heart. Whoſoever knows how to excite them ſeaſonably, maſters the mind of man as he pleaſes.

478. The paſſions are impetuous emotions of the ſoul, which carry us towards an object, or make us turn away from it. In order to excite them, we muſt paint the objects with qualities agreeable and uſeful, or diſagreeable and detrimental, to thoſe we are ſpeaking to.

479. Love and hatred are the baſis of all the other paſſions, becauſe they include the two relations of our ſoul with good and evil. If the evil is preſent, it is grief, pain; if it be abſent, with ſome appearance of avoiding it, it is fear; if it cannot be avoided, it is deſpair; if it be in other men, but ſo that it may come upon ourſelves, it is compaſſion. In like manner, with regard to good; if it is preſent, it cauſes joy: if it is abſent, and there be any means of obtaining it, it is hope: if it be in others to our prejudice, it is envy: if any attempts wreſt it from us when we poſſeſs it, it is anger. All tragic authors abound with ſimilar examples.

XXXVIII.

Of DISPOSITION.

480. Diſpoſition in the oratorial art, conſiſts in arranging all the parts furniſhed by invention, according to the nature and the intereſt of the object we treat of. Fertility of genius ſhines in the *Invention*, prudence and judgment in the *Diſpoſition*.

481. Every work, if it be complete, muſt have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Thus, in oratorial diſcourſe, there will be an *Exordium:* then follow the recitals, or the proofs; and laſtly the concluſion, whatever it may be, which at leaſt gives notice that all is ſaid.

482. An *Exordium* is that part of the diſcourſe which prepares the audience to hear the reſt. The maſters of this art will have it to be ingenious, modeſt, conciſe, and drawn from the very foundation of the ſubject. If there is a neceſſity for ſpeaking extempore, they ſeize the firſt *Exordium* that occurs; and if none can be readily found, they enter upon the matter without any other preparation.

483. There are two ſorts of *Exordiums;* one of which is made in the inſinuating way, when the intention is to diſpoſe men by degrees, to take the road we would have them follow, or to bring them back gently from their prejudices. The other, called in terms of art, *Exordium ex abrupto*, is uſed, when violent grief, great joy, or ſtrong indignati-

on, dwells in the hearts of the hearers. Then the orator breaks out in beginning, as Cicero does in his *Catilinaries*.

484. Narration, or recital, in the judicial kind, commonly comes after the diviſion; becauſe in this caſe the proof muſt ariſe from the facts. The art of this part conſiſts in preſenting the firſt dawning of the proofs we intend to employ; to the end that they may afterwards appear truer and more natural, when they are deduced by way of argumentation.

485. The order and the details of the recital, ought to be directed to the ſame end. In the moſt apparent places the favourable circumſtances are exhibited, whilſt we leave in obſcurity, or repreſent but faintly, thoſe that are diſadvantageous.

486. Next come the *Proofs*, for the arrangement of which, rhetoricians propoſe the model of an army. In the firſt rank they place the moſt vigorous and the braveſt; to ſecure the victory, other choice troops are kept in reſerve; and in the middle the ſoldiers of equivocal bravery are placed.

487. Yet each ſubject has its peculiar rules; it reſts on the prudence and good ſenſe of the orator to find them and follow them. All that is to be recommended, is plainneſs and preciſion. A proof too diſtended, grows weak; when too cloſe it becomes obſcure.

488. An orator has two things to perform in his proof; firſt, to eſtabliſh his propoſition by all the

means which his cauſe affords; ſecondly, to refute the means uſed by his adverſary. Refutation requires much art, becauſe it is more difficult to cure a wound than to make one. The retorting an argument, when it is feaſible, has a very good effect.

489. *Peroration* is the concluſion of a diſcourſe. It commonly includes a recapitulation of all the moſt ſtriking paſſages of it, whether to convince or to affect; and this leads back to the propoſition, as to a final reſult of the reaſons alleged.

XXXIX.

Of ORATORIAL ELOCUTION.

490. *Elocution* ſeems to operate more than all the reſt on the mind of the hearers: therefor the Greek and Latin rhetoricians entered into the niceſt diſcuſſions on this matter. They even went ſo far as to count the letters, the ſyllables, meaſure the words, and compute the time they took in pronouncing them.

491 A thought may be expreſſed three ways; by the tone of the voice, as when we grone; by the geſture, as when we make a ſign to any one to advance, or draw back; by ſpeech when we pronounce words. The laſt is called *Elocution*

492. As thought in general is the repreſentation of ſomething in the mind, ſo expreſſion in general is the repreſentation of the thought: and as there are three ſorts of thoughts, idea, judgment, and

ratiocination; ſo there are three ſorts of expreſſions, the term, the propoſition, and the argument.

493. Thoughts and expreſſions have two ſorts of qualities; ſome may be called logical, becauſe it is reaſon and good ſenſe that require them: the others are qualities belonging to taſte, becauſe they are determined by it. The former are the ſubſtance of the diſcourſe, and the latter the ſeaſoning of it.

494. The firſt eſſential quality of a thought is, truth; *i. e.* that it repreſent the object ſuch as it is. The expreſſion is likewiſe true, when it repreſents juſtly to others the thought we have. It is falſe, when it does not exhibit in that manner.

495. A thought perfectly true, is *juſt*. Cuſtom, however, makes ſome difference between the truth and the juſtneſs of a thought: truth more preciſely ſignifies the conformity of the thought with the object; juſtneſs denotes more expreſsly its extent. It is the ſame with expreſſion; it is juſt, when it has neither more nor leſs extent than the thought.

496. *Clearneſs*, or perſpicuity, is the ſecond quality, ſuppoſing it cannot be the firſt; for if it is not clear, it cannot properly be called a thought. When we perceive a thought unclouded and without obſcurity, it is *clear;* when we ſee it ſeparated from all the other objects that ſurround it, it is *diſtinct*.

497. Whoever intends to produce a thought, muſt therefor firſt of all well digeſt it, and accurately diveſt it of every thing that does not belong to it: expreſſion will then occur of itſelf.

498. Such is the ſummary of logical qualities, without which nothing can be fine in works of literature. But in order to pleaſe, it is not ſufficient that there be no faults; there muſt be graces, and theſe are derived from taſte.

499. All the rules of *Elocution*, ſo far as it is ſubordinate to taſte, are reducible to theſe two points; choice and arrangement.

500. In the choice of thoughts, we muſt reject all thoſe that are erroneous, uſeleſs, trivial, low, or unnatural. Among thoſe that may be made uſe of, the firſt that occur are the common thoughts, which ſerve as the foundation to work upon. But, in order to raiſe them, we employ all ſuch as have in themſelves ſomething agreeable, as vivacity, energy, copiouſneſs, boldneſs, gracefulneſs, ingenuity, nobleneſs, etc.

501. With all theſe ſpecies of thought, as many ſorts of expreſſions correſpond. Yet there may happen to be in the expreſſion, a character of ingenuity, boldneſs, etc. that is not in the thought, which proceeds from the difference of the rules of nature, and thoſe of art in this point.

502. There are proper terms, which are uſed in their primitive and natural ſignification; and borrowed terms that are employed in a ſenſe foreign to them, but which is lent them on account of ſome reſemblance between the objects.

503. Whenever the proper word is not uſed to expreſs an idea, it is done either through ignorance,

neceſſity, or taſte. When it is done ignorantly, it is the fault of the perſon, who does not underſtand his own language. When through neceſſity, the defect is in the language, which does not afford the mind all the words it wants. When it proceeds from taſte, it is becauſe we find in the improper word an agreeableneſs which is not in the proper one.

504. Clearneſs being the firſt beauty of diſcourſe, and propriety of terms, being the principal ſource of clearneſs, propriety muſt be conſidered as one of the moſt precious qualities of expreſſion. It is eſpecially eſſential in didactic works.

505. Borrowed terms, when they are ſo by taſte and choice, make the diſcourſe agreeable and brillant. They are called *Tropes*, from a Greek word, which, in general, ſignifies change, or tranſport. The following are ſome of the principal *Tropes*.

506. *Metaphor*, is a term transferred from its proper and ordinary ſignification, to another that is improper to it, ſo as that ſome agreeableneſs reſults from it; as when we ſay, a *Harveſt of Gold*, a *ſmiling Meadow* etc. If the *Metaphor* be extended, and we continue it by taking in new words, it is then called *Allegory*.

507. *Metonomy*, points out a thing by the name of its author, as the *Labours of* Mars, for war, the Muſes, for the fine arts. It alſo takes the cauſe for the effect, and the thing containing, for that contained.

508. *Synecdoche*, places a part inſtead of the whole, the forehead for the whole face, or even for the whole perſon; the whole for a part; and the matter for the thing itſelf.

509. *Irony*, or counter-truth, is uſed when we preciſely ſay the contrary of what we think, in order to make ſport at the expence of the perſon we impoſe upon.

510. *Hyperbole*, reſembles *Irony*, in that it adds to the thing ſpoken of, ſome degrees, more or leſs, than it has in reality. Thoſe who are deſirous of larger details on this head, may find them in Mr. Du Marſais's excellent treatiſe on *Tropes*.

511. There are phraſes, words, expreſſions, which are deſtined to appear in the more elevated performances, ſuch as panegyrics, ſtudied diſcourſes, lofty poetry; they are called *noble* terms: and there are ſome, which, notwithſtanding their energy, are condemned to remain in abaſement; and theſe are called *low* terms. Between theſe two degrees, there is a medium, which contains all the phraſes and all the words, that have ſomething of the two extremes, without uniting them. Thoſe phraſes and words form the body and the baſis of every diſcourſe; and afterwards the mixture of *noble* or *low* terms, either ennobles or degrades it.

512. There is in all good writers, a coherent body of natural thoughts, taken from common ſenſe, and derived from the very eſſence of the ſubject: it is the eſſence of the whole compoſition.

Scribendi recte ſapere eſt, et principium et fons. On this uniform ground, the flowers of elocution are ſtrewed with choice and taſte.

513. The order in which we place the expreſſions and thoughts, can have but two objects in view; either to give them more grace or more energy. But it rarely happens that grace and energy are ſeparated. The arrangement of the words contributes at once to give eaſe and clearneſs to diſcourſes, from whence gracefulneſs proceeds; and to make the ideas join properly, to combine them mutually, proceeds energy.

514. When this connection is ſenſible to the ear and the mind, by the concert and agreement of the ſounds which compoſe the words, there reſults from it the charms of what is called *Harmony*.

515. We underſtand by *Figure*, in point of elocution, the arrangement of the parts of an oratorial phraſe, or even of ſeveral phraſes together, with a certain analogy of ſymmetry.

516. The figures of words conſiſt in the manner of arranging them, in order to give them an eaſier or a firmer courſe. Sometimes in the *repetition* of a conjunction in poetry; or of an exclamation: the *gradation*, which places the words according to their degree of ſtrength or weakneſs; *he departs, he runs, he flies:* the *regreſſion*, which throws back the words upon themſelves, with a different ſenſe; as, we muſt not *live* to *drink* and *eat*, but we muſt *eat* and *drink* to *live:* the *disjunction*, which emits

the conjunctive particles, in order to render the diſcourſe more lively and rapid: the *Adjunction*, which is done by ſuppreſſing one of two verbs; as complaiſance *makes* friends, and truth enemies.

517. Among the *Figures of Thoughts*, we make a diſtinction between thoſe which excite the attention, and thoſe that chiefly affect the heart. To move the heart, we muſt apply to the mind; and to awaken the mind, we muſt intereſt the heart.

518. *Subjection* is a poignant figure, whereby we interrogate an adverſary or an auditor, at the ſame time taking the anſwer upon ourſelves. The interrogation animates the mind: the hearer ſeeks the anſwer, and takes delight in previouſly finding it.

519. The *Ante-occupation* prevents the objection, in order to refute it before-hand. It is a dexterous turn to elude, or at leaſt to weaken, the reaſons that may be brought againſt us.

520. *Compenſation*, which is analogous to *Parallel*, makes two things, or two perſons, figure together. It is a pleaſant exerciſe for the mind, which goes and returns from one to the other, counts the features and ſtrokes, compares them, and is continually judging of the difference and the reſemblance.

521. *Suſpenſion*, or *Suſtentation*, is one of the moſt poignant figures. It is made, when after a diſcourſe of ſome length, which promiſes ſomething intereſting, we preſent quite another object

than that which was expected. Such is the well known ſonnet of Scarron, which begins with this verſe;

Monuments ſuperb of human pride.

522. *Reticence*, is the diſcloſing of a thing, whilſt we declare that we ſhall be cautious of mentioning it.

523. In *Correction*, the orator takes himſelf up abruptly, as if he would ſpeak more to the purpoſe, or talk of another matter.

524. The *Apoſtrophe*, is uſed, not when we direct our ſpeech to any body, but when we turn it off from thoſe we talked to in the beginning, in order to ſpeak to others. We may uſe it towards the living, the dead, to perſons preſent and abſent, and even things inanimate.

525. In *Dialogiſm*, a man talks with himſelf, or elſe makes two perſons talk together.

526. *Proſopopeia* opens tombs, raiſes the dead, makes heaven and earth ſpeak, and all beings too, whether real, abſtracted, or imaginary. This is one of the fineſt turns of Elocution.

527. *Hypotypoſis*, is an image, a picture. When it paints the outſide of man, it is called *Proſpography*. When it paints the manners, we call it *Ethopeia*. If it be employed in deſcribing places, it is *Topography*.

528. *Compariſon* conſiſts in oppoſing to each other two objects that are ſimilar, either in ſeveral parts, or in one alone.

529. *Antitheſis* oppoſes words to words, and thoughts to thoughts. It is a figure that eaſily occurs to the mind; but when it returns too frequently, mars the ſtile rather than adorns it.

530. The principal figures, made uſe of to affect the heart, are *Exclamation*, which breaks out with interjections; *Confeſſion*, which acknowleges the crime in order to obtain pardon; *Deprecation*, which has recourſe to prayers and tears; *Commination*, which vents itſelf into menaces; and *Imprecation*, which is expreſſive of fury and deſpair. *Interrogation* is often found in all theſe figures, and ſerves to render the ſtile very vehement.

531 Amongſt all the oratorial figures, there is none that contributes more than *Amplification* to expreſs a ſentiment, in every ſenſe it is capable of. An important thought that paſſes like a flaſh of lightening, is ſcarce perceived; if it be repeated in an artleſs manner, it no longer has the merit of novelty. It muſt therefor be preſented ſeveral times, and each time with different decorations; ſo that the mind being taken up with this ſort of artifice, may dwell with pleaſure on the ſame object, and receive every impreſſion intended to be given.

532. *Harmony*, in general, is the accordance of ſeveral things exiſting in the ſame genus. Thus, colours have harmony in a picture, lines drawn in a plot of ground, ſounds in muſic, thoughts in diſcourſe; in fine, words and turns in ſtile.

533. In diſcourſe we diſtinguiſh three ſorts of

accordances; that of ſounds and words, conſidered as a continued chain, a ſeries of things which hold together, and mutually bear away each other; 2. That of the parts between themſelves, conſidered with reſpect to a certain extent, and as pieces of a compartment made to figure together; in fine, 3. The agreement of thoſe ſame ſounds and words, compared with the things they ſignify.

534. The firſt ſpecies of accordance may be called *Melody:* this is the ſucceſſive agreement of the ſounds, of which only a part exiſts at a time, but it is combined by its affinities with the ſounds that precede or follow, as in muſical ſongs. The ſecond, called *Number*, conſiſts in the diſtribution of the pauſes, as the ſenſe and the ear require. The third ſpecies, which retains the name of the genus, reſults from the accordance of harſh or ſmooth ſounds, flat or ſharp, brief or long, lofty or gentle numbers, bold or timid, etc. with the ſweet or harſh, ſerious or gay, ſlow or quick ideas, etc. which we want to expreſs.

535. The elementary ſounds, and the primordial combinations of language, form a common maſs, from whence nations have drawn all their words, which they framed agreeably to certain laws, introduced among them by cuſtom, habit, example, neceſſity, art, imagination, occaſions, or chance. It is thus that all the airs, every ſpecies, and kind of muſic. are derived from ſeven notes.

536. It is obſerved with regard to ſounds, 1. That

the more they approach to the ſimplicity of the elements, the ſweeter they are, and eaſier to pronounce; 2. That the longer they are, the more melodious; 3. That the more clear they are, the more ſonorous. On the contrary, the more they are either compounded, brief, or cloſe, the more harſh, dry, or dull, they will be.

537. As to the combination of ſounds, it muſt be obſerved, that the vowels which join in uniting them together, are always ſoft; that thoſe which do not join, produce yawnings, called *hiatus*; that the conſonants which jarr one another, are harſh more or leſs, becauſe the configuration they give to the vowel, becomes laboured, and ſeems overcharged.

538. The perfection of this kind conſiſts in ſo diſpoſing the conſonants and the vowels, that they may mutually give each other conſiſtency and ſoftneſs; that the conſonants ſupport the vowels, and that the vowels in their turn combine and poliſh the conſonants.

539. *French* ears are very nice about the connection of words with each other, and with much more reaſon about the combination of letters and ſyllables in words. They make choice of words which are nervous and ſoft, and at the ſame time flow freely and lightly, that are poliſhed without being effeminate, and elevated without being harſh or ſtiff. And perhaps, in this part, the French tongue is the moſt perfect of the living languages.

540. As to the connection of the members, the whole is reducible to eaſe and variety. This laſt quality muſt even prevail over the other, in order to prevent the diſguſt occaſioned by too ſtrict an uniformity.

541. The *Oratorial Number*, is taken in the ſame ſenſe as the *Rhyme* of the Greeks. It denotes, 1. A ſpace, whatever it be, whoſe affinity with another ſpace is eaſily found; 2. The ultimate ſounds, which render the cadence, the end of a member, or of a period, agreeable: 3. What muſicians call time, which makes the ſong more or leſs quick or ſlow; in fine, we ſometimes give this name to what the Greeks call *Metre*, and the Latins *Feet*, and which we may call meaſure, though not with ſo great propriety.

542. It was on account of reſpiration, that the neceſſity of the oratorial number was firſt felt. The vocal organ requires an interval to reſume its ſpring; and nature, which never ſeparates the agreeable from the truly uſeful, has annexed a pleaſure to reſpiration, which the audience feel no leſs than the orator.

543. Beſides this kind of pauſe, three others may be diſtinguiſhed; 1. The pauſes of the objects, which ariſe from their being preſented without confuſion, and conſequently ſeparated by ſome interval; 2. The pauſes of the mind, which are relative to the three operations of the ſoul, idea, judgment, and ratiocination; and, 3. The pauſes of the

ear, which come after a certain ſpace, and are like ſo many points, deſtined to terminate a certain ſeries of time, and to mark the inſtant for beginning another ſeries.

544. The pauſes of the breath, and thoſe of the mind, may be marked by punctuation. The pauſes of objects and of the ear are not marked by any ſenſible ſign in writing; and in pronunciation only by tones, which taſte alone preſcribes. This is the reaſon why ſo few perſons can read ſo as to be heard with pleaſure.

545. Poetry has choſen its pauſes, according to the laws of taſte. Therefor proſe, in order to pleaſe, muſt follow nearly the ſame rules, ſince it is to be conveyed by the ſame organs, and judged by the ſame taſte.

546. In poetry, it is the firſt interval that commonly ſerves to regulate the others. In proſe, the intervals are independent of one another: provided they do not go beyond certain bounds, it is ſufficient. It may be ſaid, that proſe is only impriſoned, but poetry is fettered.

547. In this matter, offence is given by the two extremes. Obſcurity and embarraſſment ariſe, when the pauſes are too few: and affectation, when too many. Some think they have done wonders, when they have heaped ſymmetry upon ſymmetry, and all the thoughts are in compartments; and it happens, that inſtead of a noble, free, and vigorous

elocution, we meet with nothing but an affected ſtile, and a puerile brillancy.

548. The French have reſerved to their poetry, the abſolutely excluſive privilege of ſymmetrical cadences, which are rhyms, in the ſame manner as the ancients reſerved brillant metre for theirs. Yet the numbers in French poetry may be directed by ſome rules in the ſyllables preceding the pauſes. The option lies in the orator, according as the ſubject he handles requires, or the very thought he preſents, or, in fine, the variety, which is indiſpenſably neceſſary in this part.

549. Number, conſidered as *Motion*, conſiſts in flowneſs and ſwiftneſs, and in their degrees. The motion of a diſcourſe is found in the compoſition, as well as in the action of him who declaims. But it is rightly felt in the action only; it is the ſame in written muſic, where we are not ſenſible of it but when it is ſung.

550. Nothing is of more importance to an orator, than to know how to make a right uſe of numbers; for they contain a great part of that degree of elocution, of that demi-poetic rapture, which alone deſerves the name of eloquence.

551. The harmony of ſounds conſidered as ſigns, is the accordance of the former with the things ſignified. It conſiſts, 1. In the ſuitableneſs and agreement of the ſounds, ſyllables, and words, with the objects which expreſs them; 2. In the agreement of the ſtile with the ſubject.

552. The firſt ſounds were imitative. They are founded in, or run through all languages, and ſerve as the baſis of them. We find them in an infinite number of terms, as in French in the words *gronder*, *murmurer*, *tonner*, *ſifler*, etc. *i. e.* to *grumble*, to *murmur*, to *thunder*, to *whiſtle*, or *hiſs*.

553. From thence we may infer, that the firſt principle for harmony is to make uſe of words or phraſes, which contain by their ſoftneſs or harſhneſs, or ſlowneſs or ſwiftneſs, the imitative expreſſion that may be in the ſounds. All great poets have laid down this as a rule.

554. The duration of ſounds may alſo contribute to expreſſion. The Greeks and Latins had this advantage, that ſome of their vowels were long, and others ſhort. However, the French have long ones in their manner; and by compariſon with the ſhort, from their arrangement, is produced the harmony that ſuits words taken ſeparately.

555. There is another that belongs to phraſes, which, in repreſenting the connection of certain ideas, muſt bear the character of them, be more ſoft, more light, more flowing, according to the words we chuſe, the place we give them, and the manner in which we arrange them.

556. *Harmony of Stile*, is that of the general tone, either of the writer who compoſes, or of the orator who declaims, with the ſubject taken alſo in general, and in the whole. The eſſential point

is to be well verſed in the ſubject we handle, to feel its weight, extent, and degrees of dignity: after which we give it the thoughts, the words and the turns that are proper for it.

557. There is a wide difference between the lofty and the ſimple ſtile. The moſt noted character of the latter, is, that it has neither fixed melody, nor harmony, uniformly maintained, nor ſenſible number. All is negligent, and without any progreſſion in the ideas and phraſes.

558. Of the two ſpecies of *Harmony*, the firſt, which is the accordance of ſounds with objects, is ſcarcely found but in poetry, and eſpecially in the more elevated kind; for as poets, in their enthuſiaſm, perſonify every thing in nature, giving motion and action to all, and a lively action too, imitation is more eaſily practiſed and the reſemblances more ſenſible. In the other kinds, where there muſt be as much reaſoning as painting, this harmony is much leſs frequent, and leſs remarkable. The whole is reducible almoſt to melody, and to the ſecond ſpecies of harmony.

559. Stile* reſults from the choice and arrangement of words, according to the laws of harmony and number, relatively to the elevation of the ſimplicity of the ſubject. It is the manner, the tone,

* The word formerly ſignified the needle made uſe of to write on tables overſpread with wax. This needle was pointed at one end, and flatted at the other, in order to eraze at pleaſure: which made Horace ſay, *Sæpe ſtylum vertas.*

the colouring, that reigns ſenſibly in a work, or in any of its parts.

560. There are three ſorts of ſtile, the *ſimple*, the *middling*, and the *ſublime*, or rather the elevated ſtile.

461. The ſimple ſtile is uſed in familiar converſations, letters, and fables. It ſhould be pure, clear, and without any apparent ornament.

562. The middling or mediocre ſtile has all the clearneſs of the ſimple ſtile, and admits of all the ornaments and all the colouring of elocution.

563. The ſublime ſtile is that which makes nobleneſs, dignity, and majeſty reign in a work. All the thoughts in it are noble and elevated; all the expreſſions are weighty, ſonorous, harmonious, etc.

564. The elevated ſtile, and what is called the ſublime, are not the ſame thing. The latter is every thing that raiſes, ſeizes, or ſuddenly diſturbs the ſoul. It is a momentary flaſh. The elevated ſtile may be long kept up: it is a lofty ſtrain, it is noble and majeſtic.

565. Theſe three ſorts of ſtile are often found in one and the ſame work, becauſe the ſubject matter ſinking and riſing, the ſtile which is, as it were, borne along by the matter, muſt riſe and fall with it. But we muſt carefully contrive the paſſages, and the connections, to ſoften or heighten the tints inſenſibly; except in certain caſes, where the matter breaking off ſuddenly, the ſtile is obliged to change abruptly.

566. The ſtile may alſo be *periodical*, or *divided*. The periodical ſtile is that wherein the phraſes are combined with one another, either by the ſenſe, or by the conjunctions. The divided ſtile is that in which all the parts are independent, and without any reciprocal connection.

567. We may define the *Period* to be, a thought compoſed of ſeveral other thoughts, each of which has a ſuſpended ſenſe, untill a final pauſe, which is common to them all. Each of theſe thoughts taken ſeparately, is called a member of a period. There may be to the amount of four of theſe members in a period; when they are more in number, it is a periodical diſcourſe.

568. We call *Inciſes*, ſome other parts, which enter into the compoſition of the members of the period, in order to extend, or ſtrengthen the thought.

569. The principal things to be obſerved on the members of the period, is, that if they are too ſhort, they will want conſiſtency; if too long, they will want motion; that the cadences of each member ought to be accompanied with ſomething agreeable, and that of the laſt member ſhould always be more ſo than the others; in fine, the thoughts muſt here remain fixed without conſtraint, and ſucceed one another in ſuch a manner, in the progreſſion, that the laſt may always add ſomething to thoſe that precede.

570. The periodical ſtile has two advantages over

the divided ſtile: 1. It is more harmonious: 2. It keeps the mind in ſuſpenſe. The divided ſtile has more vivacity and ſplendor. They are both alternately uſed as the matter requires.

571. Among all the qualities that characterize good ſtile, there is one that ſurpaſſes all the others, and which ſeems to contain them all: it is *ſimplicity*: the Greeks and Latins were acquainted with it, at leaſt as well as we are; but they had no preciſe term whereby to deſcribe it.

572. We muſt not confound ſimplicity with bluntneſs The latter is a flight of imagination, which eſcapes us unawares, and ſometimes to our prejudice. Simplicity, on the contrary, is the language of frankneſs, freedom, and eaſe.

573. A work of taſte may contain four kinds of thoughts, which it is neceſſary to diſtinguiſh: *plain* or ſimple thoughts, *natural* thoughts, *choſen* thoughts, and *forced* thoughts. Theſe characteriſtics may be found in pictures, as well as in diſcourſes.

574. The ancients ſeem to have employed three principal means, to attain that ſimplicity in which they have often excelled; the brevity of the ſigns, the manner of arranging them, and the way of combining them together.

575. The art of tranſitions is very difficult eſpecially to thoſe who are not ſufficiently maſters of their ſubject, who have not gone deep enough into it, to know all its parts and articulations. From

hence ariſes the great number of forced and ſhocking tranſitions.

576. Simplicity includes warmth, energy, and vivacity. When the thoughts are conveyed in few words, and in due order, they have that fire, that victorious light, which enlightens and enflames at the ſame time.

577. The French tongue, though more confined in its conſtructions than the Greek and Latin languages, has marvellouſly obeyed the great writers of the age of Lewis XIV. who have left us maſterpieces in every kind.

578. Imitation of good authors does not conſiſt in plagiariſm, nor in a ſtile formed of ſlips of all ſorts of colours: a man muſt ſtore his mind with his models, raiſe himſelf to their tone, and wait for the moments of rapture; which is no leſs eſſential in eloquence than in poetry.

XL.

Of PRONUNCIATION.

579. We cannot read in company, and much leſs ſpeak in public, if we are not well verſed in the rules of *Pronunciation*. The firſt of theſe rules conſiſts in *clearneſs*. To this end, we muſt ſpeak ſlowly, diſtinguiſh the ſounds, not neglect the finals, ſeparate the words, the ſyllables, ſometimes even certain letters, that might be confounded together, or by their jarring, produce a bad ſound; ſtop at

the points and commas, and whereſoever clearneſs and ſenſe require it.

580. In the ſecond place, the pronunciation muſt be eaſy and flowing. The moment the orator is in pain, the audience ſuffer.

581. Thirdly, we muſt aſſume the tone that ſuits with what we are ſaying. As there is a vaſt variety in theſe tones, it it very difficult to point out their differences, and lay down rules for them. Yet it ſeems they may be reduced to three kinds; the familiar tone, the nervous tone, and a third, which may be called the middle tone, on account of the medium it keeps between the other two.

582. The familiar tone, is that of common converſation. It neither affects harmony, nor runs into monotony. It conſiſts in gentle and ſimple inflexions. The nervous tone, is that which is uſed in delivering weighty diſcourſes, or in reading very ſerious works. The voice is always full, the ſyllables are pronounced with a ſort of melody: the inflections are never varied but with dignity. The middle tone has a little more preparation than the familiar, and a little leſs than the nervous or ſupported tone. Theſe three ſpecies of tones have each their degrees, in which there is more or leſs energy, according to the ſubject, the actors, the audience, and the places.

583. The aucients had, on the tones of voice, and on geſtures, a collection of precepts, which ormed an art, and ſerved as rules for ſpeaking in

public. They even thought that this part was one of the moſt conſiderable, in the art of perſuading and affecting. It is well known, that Demoſthenes reduced to action alone all the parts of the orator.

584. Action, or declamation, is a ſort of corporal eloquence, an expreſſion that conſiſts in the geſtures, and in the tones of the voice. This ſpecies of elocution has, as well as the language of words, its elements. In like manner it has its ſimplicity and copiouſneſs: it has its particular harmony with each object: and a general one with the whole ſubject. It has its melody, its numbers, its variations, its decency; in fine, it has its deficiences and exceſſes.

585. There are three ſorts of geſtures; ſome *imitative*, as when we counterfeit the tones or the manners of any perſon; others *indicative*, which only point out a place, a thing, or a perſon; and in fine, there are *affecting* geſtures, which paint the actions of the ſoul, and impreſs them on the ſpectators.

586. The *affecting* geſture, is the picture of the ſoul. It is this that puts life in a diſcourſe, and alone makes eloquence triumph. It takes in all the attitudes of the body, and all its motions, without any exception.

587. There is no paſſion, not an emotion of any paſſion, not a ſingle part of this emotion, but what has its particular geſture and tone, its modulation,

its degrees of geſtures and tones. There is no orator without his peculiar geſtures, and his individual tones, to expreſs this emotion. In fine, there is no auditor, if he is a man, but is capable of ſeizing this expreſſion, and feeling its juſtneſs.

588. *Decency* extends to every thing the author ſays and does. It ſhews him what is required of him by the ſubject he handles, the place he is in, the audience that liſten to him, the thought he expreſſes, and laſtly, his age and quality. It is this alſo that regulates the tone and geſture.

589. Of all the emotions, the moſt decent and the moſt eloquent, is that which diſcovers the confidence of the orator, in the goodneſs of his cauſe, and his certainty of preſenting it in a manner that ſhall perſuade thoſe he is ſpeaking to. It is this emotion, that conſtitutes what is called the *tone of authority*, when the orator, maſter of his ſubject, and maſter of himſelf, appears confident without pride, and relies on himſelf for ſucceſs.

590. There is no art but what requires ſome powers; but if there be any one that particularly requires, and is deſerving of them, it is that of the orator, called to ſpeak in publie, and preſent truth in a victorious manner.

XLI.

Of RECITAL.

591. *Recital*, is an exact and faithful declaration of an event. If it delivers more or leſs, it is not

exact; if it ſets it forth in any other manner, it is not faithful.

592. Every *Recital* is the portrait of the event that is the ſubject of it. The painter employs natural and imitative ſigns, which are features and colours. The hiſtorian makes uſe of arbitrary and inſtituted ſigns, which are words. Both, when they mix fiction with truth, act like poets, at leaſt in the feigned part of their works.

593. *Recital* is in its full beauty and perfection, when to faithfulneſs and exactneſs, it joins brevity, plainneſs, and ſuch a ſort of intereſt as is ſuitable to it.

594. There are three kinds of *Recital;* the *oratorial*, the *hiſtorical*, and the *familiar*. Notice has been taken of the firſt and third, in what we have ſaid of oration and apologue, ſo that our buſineſs is with hiſtorical recital.

595. This has as many characteriſtics, as there are ſorts of hiſtories. There is the hiſtory of mankind, conſidered in their relations to, or connections with, the Deity; this is the hiſtory of Religion: the hiſtory of mankind, in their dealings and connections together, we call *Prophane* hiſtory; and laſtly, There is *Natural* hiſtory, whoſe object is the productions of nature, its phænomena, and its variations.

XLII.

Of the HISTORY *of* RELIGION.

596. This hiſtory is ſubdivided into two ſpecies,

one of which is *Sacred* hiſtory, written by inſpired men; the other is *Eccleſiaſtical* hiſtory, written by men aſſiſted only by the light of nature.

596. The ſacred book diſplay hiſtory to us in all its grandeur and nobleneſs. There we find the ſublime, mixed with the ſimple, the moſt moving recitals, the pureſt plainneſs, the moſt perſuaſive air of ſincerity. We perceive that the ſacred authors had every thing preſent before their eyes, and that their recital is arranged conformably to the matter in hand.

598. Sacred hiſtory is not deſigned to ſerve as a model to writers; but to teach man what he is, how he ought to act, and to what he ought to tend, according to the views of God: and yet there is nothing more perfect extant in the hiſtorical kind. It is exact, faithful, true, ſimple, without paſſion: it is truth itſelf that ſpeaks, without diſguiſe, and without ſtudied preparation.

599. Eccleſiaſtical, differs from prophane hiſtory, only in the object. The writer, left to himſelf, has no reſources but in his learning and his talents, to diſcover truth, and ſet it forth to others. But as he treats of matters in which religion is concerned, he is obliged, more than any other, to bring into his recital that ſpirit of ſimplicity and plainneſs, which a doctrine averſe to oſtentation and vanity requires. Mr. Fleury may be propoſed as a model in this way of writing.

XLIII.

Of PROPHANE HISTORY.

600. Prophane hiſtory, is the picture of paſt centuries, preſented to future ages, for their inſtruction. In this we ſee a perpetual repreſentation of revolutions in human affairs, of origins and diſſolutions of empires, of manners, of opinions inceſſantly ſucceeding one another; in fine, of all that rapid, though inſenſible motion, which carries away every thing, and is continually changing the face of the earth.

601. There are *general* hiſtory, and *particular* hiſtory. General hiſtory, properly ſo called, ſhould be the hiſtory of mankind, diſperſed over the inhabitable earth from the beginning of the world. It ſhould contain the main ſubſtance of all the hiſtories of nations, reduced to an extent proportionate to the whole body of the work. We ſhould ſee in it not only the co-temporary concatenations of the cauſes and effects on the theatre of the world, but alſo the ſeeds and ſhoots, more or leſs developed, of the cataſtrophes reſerved for ſubſequent ages.

602. It is impoſſible to have ſuch a hiſtory; but the celebrated Boſſuet has traced a truly valuable ſketch of it, in which his deſign is to ſhew, that all the revolutions in human affairs have been ſubordinate to the deſign which God had formed to found a religion deſtined for reſtoring man to his rights.

603. What we call particular hiſtory, in oppoſition to the general hiſtory of the world, may be general by oppoſition to other hiſtories whoſe object is leſt extenſive. Such is the hiſtory of a kingdom with reſpect to that of a province; of a province with reſpect to that of a city, etc,

604. The more extenſive the field of hiſtory is, the ſmaller the objects muſt appear. It behoves the writer to place himſelf in the true point of view of his work, and properly graduate the proportion of each object in his picture, according to the rules of perſpective,

605. The hiſtories of empires and kingdoms ought to be written by none but philoſophers or miniſters; or rather by philoſophers that have exerciſed the miniſterial functions; becauſe they are the only writers capable of laying open, with equal ſucceſs, the ſports and whims of the paſſions, and the ſprings of politics.

606. Xenophon, Thucidides, Tacitus, Livy, are men of this claſs; and, accordingly, in their hands hiſtory retains part of its original characteriſtic, which is to envelope morality and policy, under the cover of facts. Among the moderns, no man is more worthy to be compared with them than Mr. de Thou.

607. Some hiſtories are confined to one ſingle important event; ſuch as Cataline's conſpiracy, that of Walſtein, the revolution of Portugal, etc. In theſe ſeparate hiſtories the hiſtorian muſt, at ſetting out, acquaint the reader with the times, places,

manners, intereſts, and characters; then preſent, in the midſt of all theſe circumſtances, the ſeed or bud of the event to be related; follow its unfoldings and progreſſes, and lead it on to its end. Theſe pieces of hiſtory are very agreeable, becauſe with the merit of truth they participate of the qualities of poetry.

608. Certain hiſtories may retain this name, though they are confined to the life of one ſingle man. Such are the hiſtories of Alexander the Great, Cicero, Lewis XI. Cardinal Richlieu, Lewis XIV. etc. But in theſe we muſt conſider the ſtateſman more than the private man, otherwiſe they will be only *lives*.

609. The ancients had a particular taſte for writing lives. Cornelius Nepos, Suetonius, Plutarch, preferred this kind of recital to prolix hiſtories. The deſign of the latter, was calculated to engage the attention of philoſophical minds; that is, to make parallels of men who ſhone in the ſame ſphere. We have, in French, a crowd of works under the title of *Lives*, or *Memoirs*, among which we muſt be very careful in making a proper choice. The *Lives of illuſtrious Frenchmen*, begun by Mr. du Caſtre d'Auvigny, and continued by Abbé Perrault, deſerves particular attention.

610. The texture of hiſtory ought naturally to be in the indirect form, *i. e.* the hiſtorian muſt relate what has been done or ſaid by the actors he introduces on the ſcene, and not make them ſpeak themſelves. Yet hiſtorians, as they gradually per-

fected their art, have borrowed ſomething of the poetical manner, and turned into dramatic the too monotonial form of their recital.

611. Hiſtorians ſometimes take upon themſelves to compoſe the ſpeeches that have been made on important occaſions. Livy abounds with ſuch harangues. They are read with pleaſure; yet they caſt a blemiſh on the exact fidelity which ought to reign in hiſtory. The ſame may be ſaid of thoſe characters, or portraits, which turn certain hiſtorical works, into real galleries of painting, where unfortunately we behold almoſt nothing but pictures drawn by fancy. Reflections too much unfolded, and moral or political diſcuſſions, alſo deviate from the end of hiſtory.

612. Chronology is a light which hiſtory follows ſtep by ſtep. The preſident Henault has publiſhed a work in the way of annals, which has all the perfections of hiſtory; namely his *Chronological Abrigement of the Hiſtory of France*, from which ſeveral other writers have made abrigements in the ſame taſte. It is he alſo that put in action an intereſting part of the hiſtory of France, relative to the reign of Francis II.

613. There muſt be no oratorial figures in hiſtory, becauſe ſuch figures are made to work upon the paſſions. Now a true hiſtorian has no paſſions; he has neither friends nor foes, nor relations, nor country. He has nothing to prove, nor to controvert; he neither accuſes nor defends.

614. The principal quality of the hiſtorical ſtile,

is to be rapid. The hiſtorian haſtens to the event. This ſtile ſhould alſo be adequate to the ſubject. A general hiſtory is not written in the ſame ſtrain as a particular hiſtory: it is almoſt a dialogue uniformly kept up; it is more periodical and numerous. The works of Abbé de Vertot are eſteemed for models in this kind.

XLIV.

Of NATURAL HISTORY.

615. According to the diviſion made by Chancellor Bacon, *Natural Hiſtory* is divided into three branches; the firſt of which concerns the regular works of nature, *i. e.* thoſe in which the ordinary laws of nature ſeem to have been followed; the ſecond is its irregularities, *i. e.* the works in which nature ſeems to have deviated from its uſual walk; the third is the arts, *i. e.* the works in which nature is employed or imitated by man's induſtry.

616. *Natural Hiſtory* chiefly ſerves to raiſe our minds from the conſideration of the creature to the knowlege of the Creator: it preſents to us the univerſe as the temple of the deity; it ſhews us the attributes of the Supreme Being, his wiſdom, his power, his goodneſs, his providence, engraved every where.

617. This ſort of hiſtory affords the greateſt helps to agriculture, commerce, medicine, and all the arts. It ſhews us the products of different climates;

it gives us new ideas, in regard to employing what materials we have; it links nations together by a reciprocal communication of their riches; it makes us inhabitants of all places, as civil hiſtory renders us co-temporaries of all ages.

618. Ariſtotle, Theophraſtus, and Pliny, are the principal ancients that have wrote upon *Natural Hiſtory*. The work of the latter is as variegated as natural. It includes, beſides the hiſtory of animals, plants, and minerals, the hiſtory of the heavens and the earth; medicine, commerce, navigation; the hiſtory of the liberal and mechanic arts; the origin of cuſtoms; in fine, all human arts and ſciences.

619. In our days, we may go much farther, with the help of the reſearches made by modern naturaliſts, and the immenſe collections in the cabinets of princes, and of ſome rich perſons whoſe taſte turned that way, adding thereto the memoirs collected by learned men and travellers. All theſe materials enable our age to poſſeſs a natural hiſtory more copious, more rational, and more complete, than all that has yet appeared. This is the taſk which Meſſrs. de Buffon and d'Aubenton, are actually proceeding in with great applauſe.

XLV.

Of the EPISTOLARY STILE.

620. The *Epiſtolary* kind, is nothing elſe but the

oratorial genius lowered to ſimple converſation; and accordingly, there are as many ſpecies of letters as there are kinds of orations.

621. In a letter we counſel, we diſſuade, exhort, comfort, petition, recommend, reconcile, diſcuſs; and then it is of the deliberative kind. We accuſe, complain, threaten, demand ſatisfaction for injuries; this is the judicial kind. We praiſe, blame, recite, congratulate, give thanks, etc. and this is the demonſtrative kind.

622. There are two ſorts of letters; ſome that may be called *philoſophical*, where we handle in a free way, ſome ſubject belonging to the ſciences, or to literature: the others may be called *familiar*, and are nothing but a ſort of converſation between abſent perſons.

923. The ſtile of the latter muſt reſemble that of a converſation, ſuch as it would be with the perſon himſelf, were he preſent. In philoſophical letters, which are properly diſſertations, or diſcourſes addreſſed to a friend, we ſometimes riſe with the matter according to the circumſtances.

624. We write in a plain ſtile, to perſons who are moſt above us, but not in a familiar one. Familiarity ſuppoſes a certain friendly connection with the perſons, a ſort of equality, by virtue of which we do not cramp ourſelves in diſcourſe.

625. Balzac's Bombaſtic Stile, and Voiture's Jovial Humour, have had their admirers and imitators; but in our days, ſcarce any body condeſcends

to read thoſe authors, who indeed ran into two vicious extremes.

626. The ſimple ſtile ſeems eaſy to be imitated, becauſe the words are rightly adapted, and the turns are ingenuous: yet it is a very rare thing to reach the perfection of this ſtile. Madam de Maintenon's letters are in this reſpect almoſt as perfect as it is poſſible for any to be.

627. No body has more highly united elegance and natural graces, than Madam de Sevigny has done. Her letters abound with unexpected ſtrokes, for which ſhe was indebted to the fertility of her genius, and her happy turn of wit.

628. The Epiſtolary ſtile admits all figurative words and thoughts; but it admits them in its own manner, by preſenting them only as the expreſſions of nature.

629. Sprightlineſs may diffuſe itſelf on all ſorts of objects, however ſerious or melancholy they may be: there is always a manner of ſpeaking gracefully of them. But we muſt be extremely reſerved in point of pleaſantry, becauſe it is never good but in its right place, and in letters it is difficult to ſucceed happily in it. It is ſtill more dangerous to indulge ourſelves in jeſts, becauſe they moſt frequently have a tincture of malignity.

630. The moſt eſſential thing for writing well, is to know ourſelves, and the perſon we are ſpeaking to. A due ſenſe of this regulates what we are to ſay, and how it ſhould be ſaid: It dictates the objects and the expreſſions. But it is extremely dif-

ficult to ſeize all the relations in which we ſtand, and keep ourſelves in the ſingle point that anſwers thereto.

631. When nothing is intended but to praiſe, or congratulate, the pen may glide on freely. Delicate ears are indeed fond of ingenious turns, in compliments addreſſed to them; but even when they are void of ſuch turns, it is eaſily pardoned for the ſake of the good intention.

632. When we are upon buſineſs, embroidery is dangerous. Fit terms, ſimple turns, and brevity eſpecially, are ſeaſonable here. Say what muſt be ſaid, ſay it well, and ſay that only.

633. The heart, when it is dictating a letter, moves quicker than the pen: but, when it is under any conſtraint, the mind flags: we are barren, nothing occurs. In theſe moments of diſgrace, we muſt have recourſe to art, reflect upon what we would writ, repreſent to ourſelves the perſon to whom we write, and wind ourſelves up to the tone which we know will ſucceed with him. This is what Madam de Sevigny called *labouring*.

634. The reading of good models, may greatly help to form one's ſtile; but we ſhould not ſervilely ſtick to any model. If we have but a few peculiar and natural graces, they are always more valuable than thoſe that are borrowed.

635. It is ſcarce poſſible to compoſe a letter by rule: it is ſentiment alone that gives law, and ſentiment alone does not always well agree with rules, unleſs the latter relax.

636. Prolixity makes letters tireſome, and refinements throw obſcurity into them. It is better to be conciſe than languid, and to make the thoughts, ſomewhat ſtrong, rather than leave them without conſiſtency.

637. The letters of the learned ſometimes ſavour of ſtudy and erudition; every thing there is accurate and regular: but this accurateneſs is often attended with ſtiffneſs and dryneſs.

638. Young people give a looſe to needleſs details; they write as it were for themſelves, without ſcarcely thinking of the perſon they are writing to. It is an endleſs babbling.

639. Love-letters are ſtill more prolix. The paſſionate ſtrain that runs through them, renders them intereſting, and even affecting, when the graces of the mind and ſtile heighten the vivacity of the ſentiment. The *Letters of a Portugueze Nun*, thoſe of *Bourſault* to *Betty*, the *Peruvian Letters*, etc. are a proof of this.

640. Negociators have left ſeveral collections of important letters, wherein they give an account of their miniſtry, and ſhew the events in which they were concerned, the ſtates where they negociated, and the potentates they had to deal with.

641. The epiſtolary form is uſed in a great number of fugitive pieces, where the ſubject treated of is relative to the Sciences, the Belles-Lettres, Criticiſm, Arts, etc. Some journaliſts alſo give their extracts in this manner.

642. Courtiers commonly ſpeak with eaſe and dignity in their letters. With them every thing aſſumes a certain agreeableneſs which is like the air of the country they inhabit.

643. It is ſaid, that we ought to write as we ſpeak, but that is upon condition we ſpeak well: nay, perhaps we are obliged to write a little better than we ſpeak, even when we really talk well.

XLVI.

Of TRANSLATION.

644. *Tranſlating* ancient authors, is, if not the ſole, at leaſt the ſimpleſt, the ſhorteſt, and the ſureſt means of being well verſed in them, and learning their language.

645. A tranſlation ſhould exactly repreſent the original; it muſt be neither too free, nor too ſervile; it muſt neither ſtray into long periphraſes, which weaken the ideas, nor ſtick too cloſe to the letter, which extinguiſhes the ſentiment.

646. In *tranſlating*, there is no great difficulty to underſtand the author's thought; but the buſineſs is to repreſent, in another language, the objects, the thoughts, the expreſſions, the turns, the tones of a work; and this from a rigorous model that muſt be expreſſed with an eaſy air.

647. There is required, if not as much genius, at leaſt as much taſte, to tranſlate well as to compoſe: nay, perhaps, a little more. The tranſlator is maſter of nothing; he is obliged to follow his

author every where, and to bend to all his variations, with infinite ſuppleneſs.

648. Whoever intends to tranſlate, muſt thoroughly know the genius of the two languages he is going to handle, ſtudy the difference of their conſtruction, and what are the cauſes of what we call Galliciſm, Latiniſm, etc.

649. The Latins make inverſions when they pleaſe; but, though no law ſeems to ſubject them, their language conſtantly follows the oratorial order; and it is doubtleſs on this account that it has ſo much fire, ſo much force, ſo much paſſion, being aſſiſted in its walk by all the impetuoſity of the heart, which follows it in the ſame direction.

650. In the French tongue, the natural order is an invariable and inflexible rule. But if what has juſt been ſaid of the Latin tongue be true, what we call order, is a ſubverſion of order. When we go to the bottom of things, we ſee the French depart from the walk of the Latins but only when the caſes fail them, or they are encumbered by too great a multiplicity of articles and auxiliaries.

651. Hence it follows, that the French ought to fall into the ſame order as the Latins, as often as they are not hindered by the above reaſons. Thus all the Latin conſtructions are not ſtrangers in French, nor all the French conſtructions ſtrangers in Latin.

652. A *Latiniſm* happens in French, only when we follow in it the Latin conſtructions which French

cannot come into with a good grace; and a *Galliciſm*, in like manner, is found in Latin, when they employ in it the conſtruction which French owes only to its peculiar conſtitution.

653. The firſt principle in *Tranſlation*, is to leave the turns of phraſe juſt as they are in the author, when they equally ſuit both languages. To this may be added, the following particular rules.

654. I. The tranſlator muſt not touch the order of things, whether they be facts, or argumentations; ſince this order is the ſame in all languages, and belongs to the nature of man, rather than to the particular genius of nations.

655. II. We muſt alſo preſerve the order of the ideas, or at leaſt of the members, as we are to ſuppoſe the author has had a reaſon, however imperceptible it may be, to make choice of one arrangement rather than another.

656. III. We muſt preſerve the periods, however long they may be; becauſe a period is only a thought compounded of ſeveral other thoughts, which are combined together by intrinſical affinities. If we break or divide the phraſes, we ſhall retain the thoughts, but we ſhall have them without the affinities which determine the ſenſe of the period.

657. IV. All the conjunctions muſt remain. They are like the articulations of the members; they cannot be changed, neither in ſenſe nor place.

658. V. All the adverbs ſhould remain placed with the verb, before or after, as harmony permits or requires.

659. VI. Symmetrical phraſes muſt be rendered with their ſymmetry, or ſomething equivalent. Symmetry in diſcourſe, is the analogy between ſeveral ideas, or ſeveral expreſſions. Symmetry in expreſſion, may conſiſt in the ſounds, in the quantity of the ſyllables, in the termination, or the length of the words, or in the arrangement of the members.

660. VII. Brilliant thoughts, in order to retain the ſame degree of luſtre, muſt have nearly the ſame extent in the words: if they are contracted, we obſcure them; if they are extended, we tarniſh their ſplendor.

661. VIII. The figures in thoughts muſt be preſerved, becauſe thoughts are the ſame in all minds: they may every where fall into the ſame order. As to figures in words, their place may commonly be ſupplied by equivalents; if not, we muſt endeavour to adapt the figure to ſome other idea more ſuſceptible of it.

662. IX. Proverbs, which are popular maxims, and conſiſt almoſt of one word, muſt be rendered by other proverbs, or by phraſes ſo natural, as to deſerve to become proverbs.

663. X. All paraphraſes are vicious: it is not tranſlating, it is commenting. Yet, when there is no other way to make the ſenſe known, neceſſity is the tranſlator's excuſe.

664 XI. In fine, we muſt entirely abandon the manner or form of the text, we are tranſlating, when the ſenſe requires it for the ſake of clearneſs,

or the ſentiment for vivacity, or harmony for agreeableneſs.

665. Beſides theſe principles, which are common to all kinds of works tranſlated, there are others that ſuit only the particular ſpecies, and theſe ſpecies may be reduced to three, which are hiſtory, eloquence, and poetry.

666. When we tranſlate an hiſtorian, it is not enough that we ſtick to the genius of hiſtory; we muſt alſo follow, as cloſe as poſſible, the genius of the author. Salluſt, Tacitus, Livy, Cæſar, Quintus Curtius, Cornelius Nepos, have each their peculiar characters. If the tranſlator is not careful to render all theſe characters, he parodies rather than tranſlates.

667. In eloquence, every thing muſt turn towards perſuaſion, and go on with dignity. We muſt unfold the ideas, give them a certain extent, ſuſceptible of number and harmony, and capable of bearing the action of the orator. To which ſhould be joined the rapture, more or leſs ſtrong, of a man that aims at captivating the conſent of the hearers.

668. In poetry, this rapture is a fire that blazes out in ſtrictures or images. But a perfect tranſlation of poets is impoſſible, whether we attempt it in verſe or in proſe. Proſe can render neither the number, nor the meaſure, nor the harmony, which are the great poetical beauties: and if we attempt the tranſlation in verſe, ſuppoſing we retain the

number, the meaſure, the harmony, we alter the thoughts, the expreſſions, the turns. By a happy chance, we may render two, three, or four verſes; but all the reſt will be faint, and the fruit of an unhappy effort.

669. In proſe, there is a way of tranſlating poets with ſome ſucceſs, and giving a pretty good turn to the poetical ſtrain, which is the principal characteriſtic of verſe, provided we adhere to theſe three points, 1. Give the ideas, juſt as they are, due weight, if poſſible, or at leaſt endeavour to come up to ſomething equivalent; 2. Leave the ideas, if it can be done, or at leaſt the parts of propoſitions and phraſes, in their proper places; 3. Connect the thoughts as the author does, point like him, render period for period, divide the phraſes when he divides them, etc. This indiſputably requires much attention, but the effort is not ſo great as may be thought.

XLVII.

Of the principal FRENCH TRANSLATORS.

670. There are but few tranſlations of poets in verſe that deſerve notice. Segrais's Æneid, and Brebeuf's Pharſalia, are the principal ones. Beſides, detached pieces of Horace, Ovid, etc. have been tranſlated, and are daily tranſlating, with more or leſs ſucceſs.

671. Good tranſlations of poets in proſe, are not

much more common. All thoſe of de Marolles and Martignac, are rejected as lumber. We have Abbé des Fontains's Virgil, the Metamorphoſes of Ovid, by Abbé Banier, the Horace of father Tarteron and Abbé Batteux, etc. to which may be aſſociated Mr. de Bougainville's fine tranſlation of the Anti-Lucretius.

672. Almoſt all the Latin authors who have written in proſe, exiſt in trauſlation. Amyot and Coeffeteau were in high repute in their time. If Du Ryer had not wrote for bread, he would have equalled them. The ſecond age of tranſlation, was that of Meſſrs. de Vaugelas and d'Ablancourt, to whom we may join Mr. and Madam Dacier. In the third and laſt age, we find Meſſrs. de Touerril, Gedoyn, Terraſſon, the Abbés Mongault and Prevot d'Exiles; but they have been in ſome meaſure eclipſed by the Abbé d'Olivet, who has carried the talent of tranſlation as far as it ſeems capable of going.

573. Beſides the Latin authors, we have excellent French tranſlations of diverſe works in Engliſh, Italian, etc. We ſhall here mention no more of them, than Pope tranſlated in verſe, by Abbé du Reſnel, and in proſe, by Mr. de Silhouette; Paradiſe Loſt, tranſlated by Mr. Dupré de St. Maur, and afterwards by Mr. Racine; Taſſo by Mr. Mirabaud, etc*.

* I have hitherto conſtantly uſed Abbé de Batteux's tracts, and as they have been much farther made uſe of, than I inſinuated in a note at the beginning, I think myſelf obliged to acknowlege it.

XLVIII.

Of JOURNALS.

674. Extracts from books, and from the chief diſcoveries of every kind, have been deemed a proper means to diffuſe a knowlege thereof among the public. This way of writing was unknown to the ancients, and there is nothing extant, but the *Library* of Photius, that has any affinity with it.

675. Journals took their riſe in France, and cannot yet be reckoned an hundred years old. The gazettes * that preceded them, having begun in 1631, Mr. de Sallo, counſellor in the parliament of Paris, is the firſt that had an idea of Journals; *an idea ſo new and ſo happy, and which ſtill ſubſiſts to this day, with more vigour than ever, accompanied by a numerous poſterity.* Theſe are the expreſſions of Mr. de Fontenelle, in the eulogy of Abbé Gallois.

676. The *Journal of the Learned*, begun by Mr. de Sallo in 1665, is the only one that has hitherto had an uninterrupted duration, or whoſe interruptions did not prevent its being continued. It was under the direction of Abbé Gallois, from 1666 to 1674, incluſive; under that of Abbé de la Roque, from 1675 to 1686; under that of the preſident Couſin from 1687, to 1701; and ſince 1702, it has been

* *Gazetta*, is the name of a ſmall Venetian coin, for which they formerly had the ſheet of news.

carried on by a ſociety, which was inſtituted by Abbé Bignon, and is now under the chancellor's protection.

677. The *Memoirs* of Trevoux began with this century, and are ſtill in being. They are compoſed by Jeſuits, and have always been charged with much partiality; but where ſhall we find journals quite ſecure from this reproach? However, they contain excellent pieces, whether we regard the main ſubſtance or the turn of them.

678. Mr. Bayle has excelled in the knack of a journaliſt. His *Intelligence from the Republic of Letters*, which make eleven volumes in duodecimo, are truly a model in this kind.

679. We may almoſt place in the ſame rank, Mr. Bernard, who gave his journals the ſame title as thoſe of Mr. Bayle, Mr. Baſnage de Bauval, who has given a *Hiſtory of the works of the Learned*, in twenty-four volumes 12mo. and Mr. Le Clerc, whoſe three journals, intitled the *Univerſal Library*, *Select Library*, and *Ancient and Modern Library*, form a ſeries of eighty-four volumes.

680. Mr. de la Chapelle has been one of the ableſt journaliſts of theſe latter times. His firſt compoſition of this kind, was the *Engliſh Library*, which may be conſidered as a ſequel of the *Literary Memoirs of Great Britain*, by Mr. de la Roche, and was in its turn followed by a *Britiſh Library*. He afterwards had the principal ſhare in conducting the *Rational Library*, which he dropt towards the

end, in order to publiſh the *New Library*. In all theſe journals, there is a great deal of erudition and ſound criticiſm.

681. The *Literary Journal* of the Hague has been compoſed by divers authors, of whom the moſt known are Meſſrs. de St. Hyacinthe and Van Effen. Du Sauzet, a bookſeller, gave the *French Library*, and Mr. La Barre de Beaumarchais, the *ſerious* and *humorous Letters*, productions of an inferior rank.

682. Abbé des Fontaines made himſelf famous by the ſarcaſtical critique with which he filled that long ſeries of periodical papers, publiſhed under divers titles, the principal of which is, *Obſervations on modern Writings*. He was a man of great wit and talents: but he gave too great a looſe to paſſion, or rather to humour. Thoſe that now continue his work, are much inferior to him in point of capacity; and their critique is a real ſatire, which has entirely brought them into diſrepute.

683. The *Impartial Library*, begun in 1750, was ended in 1758, and makes a ſeries of eighteen volumes in octavo. I compoſed, ſingly, the firſt volumes of it; but particular reaſons afterwards induced me to drop the direction of this journal, and content myſelf with furniſhing the beſt part of the extracts.

684. The *Germanic Library* was begun in 1720, under the direction of Mr. l'Enfant. When it finiſhed at the 50th volume, Meſſrs. de Beauſobre, ſenior, Mauclerc, and myſelf, engaged in it. The two latter,

afterwards compoſed the *Literary Journal of Germany*, of which only four parts appeared. After this, they ſet up the *New Germanic Library*, to which being left the ſole author, I put my name in the beginning of 1750. This work was concluded at the end of the year 1759, having alſo fifty parts, like the old one, but divided into twenty-five tomes.

685. There are already eighteen tomes, or thirty-ſix parts, of the *Library of Sciences and Fine Arts*, which was printed at the Hague, and is a very good journal.

686. The *Oeconomical and Literary Intelligencer*, is alſo reckoned a very well executed collection, thirty tomes of which are extant.

687. Of all the journals written in other languages, we ſhall only mention the *Acta Eruditorum* of Leipſick, which both for duration and merit, may be put in competition with the *Journal of the Learned*.

688. *Mercuries* hold a rank inferior to journals. The oldeſt and moſt known, is the *Mercury* of France, which ſometime went under the title of *Mercure Galant*. The goodneſs of this collection, commonly depends on the talents of its conductor. Mr. de Boiſſy lately put it on a very good footing; and Mr. Marmontel, who has now the direction of it, ſeems deſtined to bring it to all the perfection it is ſuſceptible of.

689. The too great number of journals, and extreme partiality of their authors, have much diſcre-

dited them. A man muſt have great talents to pleaſe all ſorts of reader; and it is impoſſible to pleaſe all authors, who, generally ſpeaking, cannot bear with the moſt judicious and moſt decent cirticiſms.

XLIX.

Of DICTIONARIES.

690 A Dictionary is a ſeries of words ranged in alphabetical order, with an intent to explain the terms of a language, or to give a deſcription of places, the lives of illuſtrious men, definitions and examples relative to ſciences, arts, etc. In ſhort, there is ſcarce any thing but what has been ſubjected to the form of a Dictionary; and the abuſe has been carried ſtill farther herein, than with regard to journals.

691. Dictionaries that are deſtined to ſhew the ſtate of living languages, cannot be of conſtant utility, unleſs thoſe languages remain fixed. Hence it is that we have old French Dictionaries, which are of no uſe but to thoſe who will read books written at the time when thoſe Dictionaries were compiled.

692. The Dictionary of the French Academy, is a ſort of code of the language. It has been conſiderably improved in the ſecond and third editions. Of the four volumes it conſiſts of, the two firſt are for the language, and the others for the arts. The latter are properly the works of Thomas Corneille.

693. While the Academy were collecting their

materials for the firſt, Furetiere publiſhed his Dictionary, which, by ſince undergoing corrections and alterations from ſeveral hands, is become one of the beſt in its kind. It contains many more things than the Academy's Dictionary, and thereby it is of more extenſive uſe.

694. Another writer, named Richelet, alſo gave the public a Dictionary, which was pretty well eſteemed, and which, from one volume in quarto, has ſwelled to three folio volumes, by the additions made to it by other editors.

695. The Dictionary of Trevoux is a vaſt compilation, but not in great requeſt.

696. There is no dictionary of facts more extenſive than that of Moreri. It has received continual augmentations, which have brought the laſt edition made in Holland, to eight volumes in folio. They have laboured to purge it of many faults it abounded with; but in this they have ſucceeded but very imperfectly. Abbé Goujet has made ſupplements to the Paris edition, as the paſtor Roques has alſo done to that of Baſil.

697. The moſt celebrated of all Dictionaries, is, indiſputably, that of Bayle. This writer made uſe of that form, in order to exhauſt immenſe collections, which he made in the courſe of his reading, but eſpecially to make a parade of a multitude of objections againſt all the fundamental truths, and to build upon the ruins of thoſe truths, the Pyrrhoniſm with which he was poſſeſſed. This Dictionary is one of thoſe books that have done much,

and will ſtill do more miſchief in the world, The laſt editions conſiſt of four volumes in folio; to which Mr. de Chaufepied has made a ſupplement of four volumes, ſimilar in number and form, but very different with reſpect to the principles and turn of genius.

698. An enumeration of all the Dictionaries whoſe object is particular ſciences, as geography, medicine, chemiſtry, etc. would lead us too far; but we cannot paſs over in ſilence, the *Encyclopædia*, which, after having been carried on to ſeven volumes in folio, has lately been ſuppreſſed. The plan of this work was excellent; firſt-rate pens were employed in it: but the want of diſcretion in handling ſeveral articles, where the matter is of the utmoſt importance, fully juſtifies the government's meaſures on this occaſion. We can only wiſh to ſee this work continued and finiſhed, in a manner more ſuitable to public utility.

L.

Of ACADEMIES *and their Works.*

699. Italy has been the cradle of the firſt literary Academies. That of the *Humoriſts* at Rome, is one of the moſt ancient. There is now ſcarce a conſiderable city in Italy, without one or more of them, and they uſually aſſume very ſingular names.

700. The French Academy, whoſe dictionary we have already mentioned, is the moſt diſtinguiſhed

of all thoſe of the ſame kind. It owes its origin to Cardinal Richlieu, and was eſtabliſhed by the king's letters-patent in 1635. It members are confined to the number of forty, and great intereſt is always made for vacant places in it.

701. Beſides its dictionary, the French Academy has printed nothing but the ſpeeches made on the days of receiving new members, which now form a numerous ſeries of volumes, but few perſons read them.

702. There are likewiſe many collections of the academy of Jeux Floraux, at Toulouze, which are but little more in vogue, though they ſometimes contain pieces worthy of attention. The ſame may be ſaid of what has been publiſhed by the Academies of Marſeilles, Montauban, etc.

703. To the cuſtom of ſtrewing flowers on the tombs of deceaſed academicians, we are indebted for the *Eulogies* of Mr. de Fontenelle, which are of a quite new kind, and inimitable. Every thing that has been publiſhed by this illuſtrious writer, the Neſtor of the Academies of this age, cannot fail of being tranſmitted down to the lateſt poſterity.

704. The Academy of Inſcriptions and Belles-Lettres, is another ſociety very much diſtinguiſhed by the learning of its members, and the value of its works it has publiſhed. It took its riſe in 1663, but did not receive its academical form till 1701. Its memoirs appear ſucceſſively in quarto, like thoſe of the Academy of Sciences.

705. This laſt Academy, and the many others of

the ſame kind actually exiſting, are no part of our plan. We ſhall only obſerve, that the Royal Academy of Pruſſia alſo takes in the Belles-Lettres, which are the object of its fourth claſs, as may be ſeen in the thirteen volumes of its memoirs, publiſhed ſince the year 1744.

706. The Academies of Belles-Lettres ſerve to improve taſte, as do thoſe of Sciences to enlarge human knowlege. Theſe ſocieties are therefor very uſeful; but they would be much more ſo, if all their members concurred with the ſame activity towards public utility; and if, among thoſe who have this activity, emulation did not too frequently degenerate into baſe envy.

LI.

Of ABRIGEMENTS.

707. The immenſe extent of the objects of our knowlege, and the narrow limits of the human mind, oblige us to reduce what deſerves to be known, within a compaſs that will admit of our beſtowing no more time upon it than we can afford.

708. There are two ſorts of Abrigements, or two uſes to be made of them. They ſerve to prepare the mind of thoſe that have not yet learnt any thing, by furniſhing them with the elementary lights; or elſe they recall to the mind and the memory of thoſe that have gone through the whole

courſe of any ſcience, the ſummary and the eſſential part of that ſcience.

709. Good Abrigements are very rare, becauſe they require a thorough knowlege of the matter on which they reſt; to which muſt be added, that diſcernment and preciſion which few men are endued with, and the undergoing a painful labour which acquires us no great honour or reputation.

710. There is nothing but what may be abriged; religion, philoſophy, geometry, hiſtory, geography: and the extent of thoſe Abrigements varies more or leſs almoſt to infinity.

LII.

Of ESSAYS.

711. The title of Eſſays, is one of the moſt common; and every author who has nothing but vague things to ſay upon a ſingle ſubject, or on ſeveral, makes uſe of this denomination.

712. Taken in an accurate ſenſe, it ſhould indicate works in which we make, by ratiocination or experience, diſcoveries that are yet but ſketched, either becauſe their object reſiſts our efforts, or that we want ſufficient leiſure, means, or faculties, to proceed farther.

713. Such Eſſays are very uſeful, and it is from their re-union, that complete theories are afterwards produced.

714. There are works which owe their title of

Eſſay to nothing but the modeſty of their authors, who might as well have called them Treatiſes, etc. Such, eſpecially, is Lock's admirable Eſſay on human Underſtanding. The moral Eſſays of Nicole are very deep diſcuſſions, and thoſe of Mr. David Hume are maſter-pieces that will be handed down to poſterity.

715. The name of Eſſays alſo ſuits miſcellanies, or collections in the taſte of thoſe which the Latins called *Adverſaria*. We range under a ſeries of titles, all that we write on the divers matters expreſſed by thoſe titles, and are ſubjected to no order, nor to any proportion between the parts of a ſimilar whole.

716. Such, in the main, is a certain book in great repute, which contains many ſingular things, energetically thought, and ingenuouſly expreſſed. Theſe are Montaigne's Eſſays, one of the moſt attracting works that can be read, but which require knowlege and precaution in the reader, that he may not adopt ſeveral falſe or dangerous principles with which they abound.

LIII.

Of CHARACTERS.

717. It is Mr. de la Bruyere that introduced this kind of work into literature, by adding to his tranſlation of Theophraſtus's Characters, thoſe of the age he lived in. Beſides the alluſions that brought

his book into vogue, the preciſion, the wit, and the ſtrength that reign in it throughout, will always make it be conſidered as a maſter-piece of its kind.

718. All the works in which mankind are drawn, or wherein we eſpecially ſearch for the ſecret ſprings of their actions, whatever title they bear, belong to the claſs of Characters.

719. The beſt writings in this way, are the Maxims of the Duke de la Rocheſoucault, the Fallacy of human Virtues, by Mr. Eſprit, the Conſiderations on the manners of the preſent Age, by Mr. Du Clos, and the Eſſays of Abbé Troublet.

720. There are two rocks to be avoided in works of this kind; one is, the ſaying things too common, or trivial; the other is, running into affectation and abſtruſeneſs. To theſe may be added a third, which conſiſts in over-doing, exaggerating the corruption of man's heart, and refining upon things ſo far as to impute to mankind views and operations, which commonly neither enter into their heads, nor have any influence on their conduct.

LIV.

Of COUNSELS.

721. Writers, eſpecially thoſe that deal in morality, often diſguiſe the dryneſs of their precepts, under this title. We have the *Councils of Wiſdom*, thoſe of *Friendſhip*, etc. All books that invite men

to practiſe any thing intereſting or uſeful to them, may bear this title, whatever the ſubject may be.

722. Authors that follow this road, muſt conform to it, by aſſuming the true language of perſuaſion, and adorning their inſtructions with every thing that may convey them from the mind to the heart. The principal means to attain this end, are elegance of ſtile, an affecting ſtrain, a happy choice of examples, and ſuch a variety of matter as may prevent our growing tired.

LV.

Of DIALOGUES.

723. Dialogue is the moſt ancient ſpecies of writing: yet Plato, by the pleaſant dreſs in which he put this ſort of converſations, deſerves the honour of the invention. He brought Dialogue much in vogue, and almoſt all the philoſophers of his time wrote no other way.

724. The Latins, who thought it an honour to imitate the Greeks, borrowed this way of writing from them. Cicero, though an orator, and conſequently accuſtomed to connected diſcourſes, thought philoſophy could not appear to better advantage than in Dialogue: and accordingly we ſee, that moſt of his philoſophical works are in this form.

725. Cicero, always replete with the moſt judicious views, handles the moſt difficult matters with

an air of pleaſantry that ſhews how much he is maſter of them. His imagination ſeems adapted to embelliſh truth, and to give it that meaſure of gracefulneſs, which corrects its dryneſs, without making it loſe any thing of its energy.

726. Lucian lived in the reign of Trajan, and beyond that of Marcus Aurelius. His Dialogues are ſatirical, and abound with poignant irony: he attacks all the ſects of philoſophy, and all religions. But his characteriſtic of incredulity is blameable, even in a Heathen; and he is alſo with reaſon accuſed of ſpeaking of love in too groſs a manner.

727. Among the moderns, who have compoſed Dialogues, Mr. de Fontenelle holds the firſt rank. The perſonages he introduces, ſpeak with much wit; and the concluſion of each Dialogue, is ſome truth agreeably introduced and happily expreſſed. However, his concluſion is ſometimes rather parade than truth.

728. The Dialogues of Mr. de Fenelon, were intended for the inſtruction of his auguſt pupil, and very well anſwer their deſtination. Thoſe of Mr. Redmond de St. Mard, concern the paſſions, of which the author ſpeaks very ingeniouſly, but with little accuracy. Mr. Vernet's Socratical Dialogues are in the true taſte of Socrates.

729. In general, the dialogical art is very difficult. Hence it is, that ſeveral works on the ſciences, thrown into this form, are extremely inſipid. The converſations of Father Regnault, on Natural Phi-

loſophy, for inſtance, are interſperſed with merry conceits, that cannot but diſpleaſe every ſenſible reader. A better taſte prevails in the *Spectacle de la Nature*, (Nature diſplayed or delineated;) but the abrigements of the Hiſtory of the Bees, and that of the Inſects, by Mr. Baſin, come ſtill nearer to the true ſtrain of this ſort of works.

730. In order that a work may be ranked of the dialogical kind, it is not requiſite that the ſpeeches of the interlocutors be divided by their names, according to the dramatical form. It belongs to this kind, when once we ſuppoſe a converſation kept up between ſome perſons. Such are the *Worlds* of Mr. de Fontenelle, the *Newtonianiſm* of Count Algarotti, the converſations of Father Bouhours, Abbé de Villars, etc.

LVI.

Of SPIRIT.

731. This title has been much in faſhion for ſome time paſt, and the Spirit of Laws of the preſident de Monteſquieu, has eſpecially given it a ſanction. This work, without being proof againſt a judicious critique, is one of the fineſt monuments of the ſtrength of the human mind.

732. When the buſineſs concerns things, we underſtand by *Spirit*, the elements, the fundamental notions, the theory, and oftentimes even the ſcope of a doctrine. None but very philoſophical geni-

uſſes can labour with ſucceſs in this kind of writing.

733. When the matter in queſtion relates to perſons, the ſpirit of an author is an arbitrary choice of thoſe thoughts which are moſt pleaſing to him who undertakes the care of making that choice. Such were the *Spirit* of Montaign, of Fontenelle, of Voltaire, etc.

734. The famous treatiſe of *Sprit*, is a quinteſſence of all the objections which have been made hitherto againſt the principles of morality and religion. The weakneſs of the objections thus united, renders that book more uſeful than dangerous to thoſe who are capable of reflection.

LVII.

Of ALLEGORICAL LETTERS

735. All theſe letters are called ſo, to which a foreign ſirname, eſpecially an Oriental one, has been given, and in which we furniſh men who obſerve, for the firſt time, what paſſes in our own country, with arguments and reflections which contain the cenſure of opinions and manners.

736. The Turkiſh Spy, having preceded the Perſian Letters, may in ſome meaſure have ſerved as a model for them; but theſe are far ſuperior as to the delicacy of their turns, and the depth of penetration,

737. The public has favourably received divers

works in the ſame taſte, ſome of which appeared at firſt periodically, as the Jewiſh Letters, etc. But inſenſibly this imitation, like all others, has degenerated into abuſe. We muſt, however, diſtinguiſh from the crowd, the Peruvian Letters of Madam de Graſigny.

738. To ſucceed in this way, much wit is required, in order to awaken the attention; a ſufficient extent of knowlege, for the ground or ſubſtance of it; a ſolid judgment, to prevent that wit and knowlege from being laviſhed away; and much decency to ſuppreſs the inclination of hazarding things of too licentious a nature.

LVIII.

Of ROMANCES.

739. The Mileſian Fables of antiquity had a kind of diſtant likeneſs with what we now call Romance. Heliodorus, an ancient biſhop, and Achilles Tatius, have produced works ſince, which come nearer ſtill to the modern taſte.

740. A Romance is a kind of epic poem in proſe, the fable of which is intended to inſtruct, whilſt it amuſes by the recital of intereſting events. In this point of view, Romances are not to be condemned: on the contrary, they deſerve greater or leſs praiſe, according to their degree of perfection or utility. Such are the Telemachus of M. de Fe-

nelon, the Sethos of the Abbé Terraſſon, the Travels of Cyrus of the Chevalier Ramſey, etc.

741. The great Romances of the laſt century, ſuch as Cyrus, Clelia, Cleopatra, Taramond, are ſtill more in the epic taſte; but they are juſtly cenſured, for their prolixity, their affected ſtile, and a kind of love, which does not ſuit the heroes to whom it is attributed. In Boileau's works, may be ſeen the dialogue he wrote on that ſubject.

742. The Princeſs of Cleves, and Zaide, afford us the idea and model of works written with delicacy and decency, but which, nevertheleſs, cannot be looked upon otherwiſe than as frivolous.

743. Romances have greatly degenerated ſince that time, and are become miſerable rhapſodies, or books dangerous to morals, A very ſmall number of authors have diſplayed more art in their compoſitions, ſuch as the Abbé Prevôt d'Exiles, whoſe tragedy is moving, though over-ſtrained, and who tires his readers by incredible romance; and M. de Marivaux, who has laviſhed much wit in adorning ſmall events, little intereſting in themſelves. It is not neceſſary that we ſhould point out here, thoſe who have contemned decency.

744. The Engliſh have afforded ſometime paſt, Romances of a new kind, which may be called minutiæ. Theſe are details carried to exceſs, from which, indeed, the characters appear to great advantage; as in Pamela, Grandiſon, and Clariſſa,

but which require more patience than moſt readers are capable of.

LIX.

Of MYTHOLOGY

745. Mythology comprehends the knowlege of fable, and at the ſame time, the religion of the Pagans; of the myſteries, ceremonies, and worſhips, with which they honoured their falſe deities.

746. To obtain a thorough knowlege of fable, we muſt have read with care the poets, Homer and Heſiod, eſpecially the tragic ones, who have drawn from thence the ſubject of their poems; and thoſe who have made collections, either in verſe, ſuch as Ovid, or in proſe, as Antoninus Liberalis, Diodorus of Sicily, Apollodorus, Hyginus, etc.

747. There are ſeveral ſorts of fable; hiſtorical, phyſical, allegorical, moral, and ſome which are only ſimple apologues. The mythologiſt muſt, with extreme attention, endeavour to unravel and penetrate their different ſignifications.

748. There is alſo much mythologic knowlege to be drawn from the works of the philoſophers who lived in the beginning of Chriſtianity, and from thoſe of the fathers and apologiſts for the Chriſtian religion, who were attacking them, or who were vindicating themſelves from their calumnies.

749. There exiſts a crowd of authors who have publiſhed treatiſes, either on mythology in general,

or on ſome ſubject relating to it, as Van Dale on the oracles, Meurſius on the feſtivals, etc. The laſt and moſt eſteemed of all the bodies of mythology, is that of the Abbé Banier, printed at Paris in 1738, in eight volumes in twelves. The mythological dictionary of the Abbé de Clauſtre, is alſo a very good one.

LX.

Of ANTIQUITIES *and* MEDALS.

750. The ſtudy of all the monuments of antiquity which have eſcaped the ravages of time, is equally vaſt and intereſting, and ſerves to throw a light on manners, cuſtoms, and religious ceremonies, and to elucidate facts, to fix dates, etc.

751. The fineſt collection that ever was written on Antiquities, is that of father Montfaucon, which, with the ſupplement, makes fifteen volumes in folio, and in which there are added, to very exact copper plates, the moſt ſolid explanations.

752. We call Antiquarians thoſe who make it their buſineſs to explain the moſt celebrated inſcriptions and monuments. There are ſome to be found in all cities where thoſe monuments abound, and eſpecially at Rome.

753. The diſcovery made of late, of the ſubterraneous city of Herculaneum, opens a vaſt field to the lovers of Antiquities, who received with no leſs pleaſure the fine deſcription of the Ruins of Palmyra.

754. Medals are monuments the moſt durable, and moſt uſeful for hiſtory and chronology. They are univerſally in taſte; and there are abundance of cabinets more or leſs rich, in which princes and private perſons have gathered collection of Medals.

755. Many authors have acquired great reputation by explaining Medals. The principal ones are Goltzius, Fulvius Urſinus, Vaillant, Moret, Banduri, Occon, Leibe, M. de Spanheim, etc. The beſt introduction to the knowlege of Medals, is that of father Joubert. One may alſo read with advantage the treatiſe *On the Utility of Travelling*, by M. Boudelot de Dairval.

756. We call *Metallic Hiſtories*, thoſe ſeries of Medals, with their explanations, which have ſome affinity with the hiſtory of a country or of a prince; ſuch as that of Lewis XIV. by the Academy of Inſcriptions, and that of the United Provinces, by M. van Loon.

757. *Devices* and the *Inſcriptions* belong to the ſame kind. The firſt conſiſt in the union of an emblem with a ſentence. One may read the diſcourſes of father Bouhours which turn upon this ſubject, and add to them the works of father Meneſtrier.

758. Inſcriptions have been from their origin an abrigement of Hiſtory, a kind of annals. They are engraven on almoſt all the public monuments, pyramids, obeliſks, ſtatues, mauſoleums, etc. Vaſt collections of them have been made by Gruter, Reineſius, Fabretti, Gudius, Muratori, etc. The

Marbles of Arondel hold a diſtinguiſhed rank in this claſs.

759. Antiquity in general is a ſea without bottom or ſhore; every day it receives a new ſupply of knowlege. But as this ſort of ſtudy inſpires with a real paſſion thoſe who apply themſelves to it, they ought to be upon their guard, not to exaggerate too much the value of a knowlege, oftentimes more curious than uſeful.

LXI.

Of DIPLOMATICS

760. *Diplomatics* explains the ancient Documents, and apply them to hiſtory, in diſcerning the falſe from the true ones. There is a vaſt number, of which the certitude cannot be aſcertained but by that help.

761. As intereſt, and other motives, have produced the ſuppoſition or falſification of documents, there was a neceſſity to draw from criticiſm, rules applicable to the examination of thoſe pieces.

762. The treatiſe of father Mabillion is the moſt extenſive and moſt uſeful we have on this ſubject, which ſeveral learned Germans have alſo handled with ſucceſs.

763. The ſeals ſet to public acts make ſtill a kind of ſeparate ſtudy, but which tends to the ſame end, viz. the certainty of Hiſtorical facts.

764. There are vaſt collections of Diplomatics, in

which are gathered all the documents relating to a ſtate, a province, or ſome particular foundation, or endowment. Moſt of thoſe pieces might have remained in the obſcurity, from whence they have been drawn; but the utility of ſome few of them juſtifies the publication of the others.

LXII.

Of GENEALOGIES.

765. Genealogies may be conſidered in two lights; 1ſt. as they ſerve to keep families diſtinct from each other; and, 2dly, as proofs of the antiquity and ſplendor of the extraction.

766. Genealogies of the firſt order were in uſe among the Jews whilſt they preſerved a form of government. They belonged on one ſide to the eſſential conſtitution of their State, where the patrimony was to be unalienable; and they coincided at the ſame time with the views of God with regard to the promiſed Meſſiah.

767. In our days Genealogies ſerve only to trace up noble families as high as poſſible, and to prove well their deſcent. But there often-times enters much of the chimerical, or even of the notoriouſly falſe, into what is called a *tree of conſanguinity*.

768. There is not a ſovereign or a great houſe, but what have their genealogy carefully drawn up. Every province has alſo its *Nobilitary*. Meſſrs.

d' Hozier, father and ſon, laboured for France, and Hubner for Germany.

769. Works, which concern the Greek or Roman families, belong to antiquities. There was no ſuch thing then, as what we now call *Nobility*.

LXIII.

Of HERALDRY.

770. Coats of arms are in ſome meaſure a ſhort hiſtory of Families; they denote the different degrees of nobility, and the various affinities. They alſo ſometimes allude to ſome brilliant Action.

771 The moſt judicious writers have fixed the beginning of coats of arms towards the eleventh century. Travels beyond ſea gave riſe to them, and the tournaments brought them into vogue. No true coats of arms before the reign of Lewis the young, are to be met with.

772. It is to the French that we are beholden for Heraldry; they alone have brought it to an art: and it is in that language that all other nations blaſon their coats of arms. In the library of father Meneſtrier, the names and titles of the works of the authors who have written upon Heraldry, are to be met with.

LXIV.

Of CRYPTOGRAPHY.

773. Among the antients, the art of writing with notes, was a fixed method to write in a ſummary way, as rapidly as one might ſpeak. The invention of this art is attributed to Tiron, Cicero's freed man.

774. Towards the end of Auguſtus's reign, thoſe who abriged notes, (or ſhort hand) took the name of Actuarii, becauſe they digeſted all the public acts. In proceſs of time the number of theſe officers encreaſed conſiderably; their profeſſion became honourable, and of greater extent.

775. Men of letters could not do without the help of the writers of ſhort hand, who commonly were free'd men. They called Library-keepers and Antiquaries (*Librarii et Antiquarii*) thoſe who copied in a fine hand what had been written in ſhort hand.

776. Cryptography, properly ſo called, is the art of writing in a manner that cannot be underſtood by any but thoſe who have agreed concerning it, by making uſe of characters unknown, diſguiſed, and diverſified, and called Cyphers.

777. The Lacedemonian *Scytal* is a proof that the Greeks knew how to write in Cypher; and the Romans had alſo various kinds of them.

778. Soon after the revival of letters, ſome au-

thors ſet themſelves to invent new Cyphers. On this head may be conſulted the Steganography of Tritheme, the works of Cardanus, father Kircher, Gaſpard Schott, and Baptiſt Porta, adding to them a more modern Treatiſe of Mr. Breithaupt, on that ſubject.

LXV.

Of LIBRARIES.

779. The firſt nation among whom Libraries were preſerved, is Egypt. The title given to them, inſpired a deſire to be admitted to them; they were called the *Treaſure of the Remedies of the Soul.*

780. Since the early times, until that of Alexander the Great, there is a vacuum in Hiſtory with regard to Libraries. We know however that there was one at Suza in Perſia, from which Cteſias and Metaſthene drew the materials of their hiſtories.

781. One of the moſt famous Libraries in the world is that which Ptolomy Soter, King of Egypt, founded at Alexandria, and of which Demetrius Phalereus was firſt intendant. It was reckoned to contain four hundred thouſand volumes; and afterwards, the kings of Egypt gathered together one more, of three hundred thouſand, which they placed in the temple of Serapis. The firſt was burnt during the war of Julius Cæſar in Egypt, but the ſecond ſubſiſted till the year of our Lord 642.

782. Antiquity makes mention of ſeveral other

celebrated Libraries, viz. that of Eumenes king of Pergamus, that of Appellicon, of Tyrannion, of Lucullus, of Atticus, of Cicero, of the temple of Apollo made public by Auguſtus, of Veſpaſian, of Trajan, of Pliny, of Adrian, of Sammonicus, of Origen, of Alexander of Jeruſalem, of George of Alexandria, of Julius Africanus, etc.

783. They had no Libraries in France for a long ſpace of time, but among the monks; and it is from them we have derived all the knowlege we have of the works of the Ancients.

784. The invention of printing, by encreaſing the number of books, has rendered Libraries both richer, and more common. There are very fine ones in the principal cities of Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Holland, etc. But the two moſt conſiderable in the whole world, are, that of the Vatican at Rome, now under the direction of Cardinal Paſſionei, one of the moſt illuſtrious members the ſacred college ever had; and that of the king of France, the richneſs of which we may be informed of by the magnificent catalogue now publiſhing.

785. We alſo call Libraries, works compoſed in order to give an inſight into books and authors; and the writers of them are called Librarians. This knowlege has no limits now. One among the learned who diſtinguiſhed themſelves moſt in it, in this our age, is John Albertus Fabritius.

LXVI.

Of PRINTING.

786. The origin of this art is very uncertain. The moſt common opinion gives the credit of it to John Guttemberg, of Mentz, who, it is ſaid, did not divulge his ſecret, until the year 1457.

787. The progreſs of Printing was rapid. Born, as it were, in the fifteenth century, the ſixteeth beheld it in its full vigour: ſome printers, learned in the languages, and well verſed in polite literature, have publiſhed, for upwards of 100 years, very correct Editions therein. Such were Etiennes, Vaſcoſan, Morel, Gryphes, Plantin, Forben, Alde Manuces, etc.

788. Since that time the avidity of gain has occaſioned a great decay in the exerciſe of that profeſſion, which the Bookſellers diſpoſe of at will, and relatively to the welfare of their trade rather than the good of the public.

LXVII.

Of VOYAGES *and* TRAVELS.

789. When the Relations of Travellers are accurate, they ſerve as a foundation to Geography, and furniſh a more ample detail of the uſages and cuſtoms of Nations, than hiſtory.

790. Although the eaſtern nations were great na-

vigators, yet they have not left us any memoirs of their long Voyages. On that head the *Hiſtory of the Commerce of the Ancients* by Mr. Huet, may be conſulted.

791. As to the Greeks, the moſt exact narrative they have tranſmitted to us in this kind, is written by Xenophon under the title of the *Retreat of the ten thouſand*. Strabo's Geography may alſo be looked upon as a relation, executed with abundance of care and judgment. Arrian, Pauſanius, Denys the geographer, Pytheas and Euthymenes, are worthy of being mentioned. The Latins ſcarce afford an author worthy of notice.

792. Since the twelfth Century of the Chriſtian æra, Travellers went in great numbers, firſt to Aſia for the cruſades, afterwards to the Eaſt Indies by the new paſſages which the Portugueſe opened by doubling the Cape of Good-Hope, and ſince to China and Japan, and laſtly to the Weſt-Indies, which Chriſtopher Columbus made the diſcovery of in the latter years of the fifteenth Century.

793. The great collection, entitled *Hiſtory of Travels*, yields abundant matter to ſatisfy the curioſity of thoſe who are deſirous to be maſters of the ſubject.

I. XVIII.

Of GEOGRAPHY *and* CHRONOLOGY.

794. We join together theſe two branches of

knowlege, becauſe they have been called the two eyes of hiſtory. The one determines the ſituation of places, the other meaſures the duration of times.

795. Geography, or the deſcription of the Earth, is a natural conſequence of Aſtronomy; for it is by applying to the terreſtrial Globe the points and circles traced on the celeſtial Globe, that Geographers are able to fix the principal parts of the Earth.

796. It is thought that Seſoſtris firſt invented the uſe of Maps in order to deſcribe his empire, after all his conqueſts. The progreſs of Geography ſince that time, has not prevented that of the Ancients from being full of defects. The Greeks, and afterwards the Arabs, have tranſmitted to us divers geographical works.

797. The invention of Teleſcopes has led to Aſtronomical obſervations, from which modern Geography derives all its preciſion. Nothing has contributed more to it than the operation performed about thirty years ago, in order to determine the figure of the earth.

798. We have now ſeveral Atlas's that are in great eſteem, in which are to be met with a deſcription of all the parts of the Univerſe, leaving hardly any thing more to wiſh for. The queſtion concerning the union of the two Continents by the north, remains however as yet problematical.

799. The Latin work which Mr. Kleſeker, Syndic of Hamburgh, has juſt publiſhed under the title

of *Curæ Geographicæ*, may be very uſeful in directing the choice of the beſt Maps.

800. Chronology eſtabliſhes certain fixed points from which different nations compute variouſly the years, and reduces all thoſe æras to an uniform computation.

801. The moſt celebrated Chronologers are Joſeph Scaliger, Bucholcer, Sethus Calviſius, Petau, Uſher and Marſham. For the ſacred Hiſtory we have the work of M. des Vignoles.

LXIX.

Of ALEGORICAL TRAVELS.

802. Theſe works, to which the name of Imaginary Republic, is alſo ſuitable, might have been indicated in the article of Romances. They are fictions relative to Morality, to Politics, and ſometimes to Religion.

803. Moſt of theſe books are ingenious, but the opinions interſperſed in ſome of them, render them dangerous. Thoſe of the firſt rate are, Bacon's Atalantis, More's Utopia, Swift's Gulliver, Klimius's Travels, etc. In the ſecond may be placed the Hiſtory of the Sevarambes, the Travels of James Maſſe, etc.

804. Cyrano de Bergerac's Journey to the Sun and Moon, Mercure's World, Mr. de Voltaire's Micromegas, are of a mixed kind, in which natural Philoſophy and Satire are introduced.

LXX.

Of CRITICISM.

805. Among the immenſe number of objects which preſent themſelves to our reſearches in the ſingle domain of Belles Lettres, we muſt ever make uſe of the light of Criticiſm.

806. When Criticiſm has for its object the examination of works in regard to their ſtile, expreſſion, alluſions, etc. it is called *Philology;* and is an art ſubordinate to Grammar. But Criticiſm, properly ſo called, is the principle from whence we draw rules for the diſcernment of ſurreptitious writings and hiſtorical facts.

807. The æra of the latter is not very ancient. The Grammarians of the ſixteenth century, by familiariſing themſelves with the Ancients, perceived the neceſſity of ſeparating the true from the falſe, and prepared the way to Criticiſm.

808. Criticiſm was, it may be ſaid, on the Throne, in the days of Scaliger, Saumaiſe, Blondel, Launoi, Gerſon, etc. But the enthuſiaſm it occaſioned in the minds of thoſe who cultivated it, and the crowd of ſubaltern literati who meddled with it, brought it to decay.

809. The moſt inſtructive work on this ſubject, is Mr. Le Clerc's Ars Critica. The rules are very judicious, and the examples well choſen.

810. Criticiſm is abſolutely neceſſary in all diſ-

cuſſions concerning facts; Religion itſelf, ſo far from rejecting theſe diſcuſſions, allows them to be deeply fathomed, as the only means to make us keep a juſt medium between the two extremes of ſuperſtition and incredulity.

LXXI.

Of GRAMMAR.

811. It is not by a reverſion of the order of things, that we place here this branch of knowlege as the laſt. Notwithſtanding it is the firſt that opens for us a paſſage into the courſe of letters, it is alſo that which continually ſtrengthens our footſteps, and bears us up to the end.

812. A grammatical ſpirit, in the main, is the ſame thing as a logical ſpirit, ever attentive to fix properly the ſignification of terms and expreſſions, and to aſcend to the ſource of language. In this taſte are written, the *Synonyms*, and the *Principles of Grammar*, of Abbé Giraud, as alſo the *Tropes* of M. du Marſais, and all the articles which he has furniſhed for the *Encyclopedia*.

813. The ſtudy of the languages is requiſite to form the Learned; yet that neceſſity is much leſſened, now we are in poſſeſſion of ſo great a number of good tranſlations: but that which is eſſential is to ſpeak and write well our own tongue, becauſe it is the language in which we think.

814. Etymological works afford an inſight into

the origin of languages and words. We have the great Etymologicon of Voſſius, and the Etymological Dictionary of Menage, of which a ſecond edition, much enlarged, appeared in the year 1750.

815. Divers writers, as Bouhours, Vaugelas, and Corneille, have made obſervations with a view of perfecting the French language; but cuſtom brings new alterations every day, many of which rather ſpoil than refine the language. Proofs of which may be ſeen in the Neological Dictionary.

816. *Proſody* is the manner of pronouncing each word according to its three proprieties, viz. Accent, Aſpiration, and Quantity. A treatiſe on this ſubject for the French tongue has been much wanted, but the Abbé d'Olivet ſupplied this defect, in 1736.

817. To relieve children in their firſt ſtudy which is the art of reading, divers abriged methods have been invented; among which, the *Typographical Bureau* of Mr. Dumas is eminent. It will be ever difficult to apply thoſe methods to the education of private perſons, and more ſo to that of the poor.

LXXII.

Of THE LAST END OF THE STUDY OF THE BELLES-LETTRES.

818. This end is the ſame as that of all our other ſtudies and ought to refer to the great deſign of our exiſtence. Our only buſineſs in this world is to enlighten our minds, and ſanctify our hearts.

Whatſoever cannot render us more perfect, or more happy, merits not our attention.

819. It is very ſhameful for thoſe who cultivate human Learning, to yield as they continually do, to the ſuggeſtions of the moſt odious paſſions, and to diſgrace themſelves by proceedings the moſt vile and ſhocking.

820. Thoſe who join to ſolid ſenſe a ſincere love of Truth, will never ſeek in all their ſtudies any thing but the good of ſociety, and the innocent pleaſure felt in making a continual progreſs in virtue and truth.

821. When a Man is in this diſpoſition he may effectually find in reading, in writing, in meditating, moſt uſeful remedies againſt wearineſs, and want of employment, againſt a diſguſt to ſociety, and even againſt the misfortunes of this life. The cloſet of a learned Man is a true aſylum, proof againſt the moſt violent ſtorms; it is an impregnable fort, when wiſdom and piety have fixed their abode therein.

REFLECTIONS ON SPECTACLES, OR PUBLIC SHEWS.

I Do not intend to handle this ſubject according to its full extent, becauſe our beſt writers have already performed that taſk, and have diſplayed on this occaſion, all the efforts of their genius; neither do I pretend to examine the arguments for and againſt Public Shews, which are to be met with in ſome late writings concerning them. The matter is become too trite, and ſeems in a manner exhauſted. But what determined me to chuſe this ſubject, is a work of the laſt century, compoſed by one of the moſt celebrated authors of his time, of which I am ſurpriſed not one of our moderns has made the leaſt mention. It deſerved ſome notice, however, if not for its energy, at leaſt for the ſingularity of many ideas that are to be found in it. I mean the *Treatiſe on Comedy*, inſerted in the third Tome of the Moral Eſſays of M. Nicole. The reading of which by mere chance ſome time ago, has

led me to ſome reflections, which I think proper to impart to the Public, at the end of this new Edition of my Principles of the Belles-Lettres.

M. Nicole's firſt remark, is, that there has been no apologiſt for Plays before the age in which he wrote: "and that, he adds, is becauſe the other "ages were more ſimple in regard to good and "evil, and that thoſe who profeſſed piety, expreſ-"ſed a conſtant horror for prophane Plays." If this able Writer had conſidered more attentively his own century, he would have perceived that one might without aſperſing, and diſparaging it, juſtify a change of ideas with regard to plays. For this purpoſe it is neceſſary we ſhould trace their hiſtory, and ſpecify with exactneſs, its periods. Public Shews were firſt of all tranſmitted to us from the pagans, and for a long time they ſavoured of their origen. It is even pretended they made part of the religious ceremonies of the heathens, and that this was the chief reaſon why the Fathers thundered againſt them, and the Councils ſtigmatized them with anathemas. It is evident that this firſt age of Public Shews has nothing in common with the drama in our days; and that ſuch pieces as abound ſtill with ideas borrowed from paganiſm, as *Amphitryon* and moſt of the Operas, far from favouring that Religion, they diſcredit it ſtill more, and diſcover all its abſurdities.

From that extreme they fell into another diametrically oppoſite. Public Shews had been a part of

the Heathen worſhip: they muſt need apply them in like manner to that of the Chriſtian. It is well known that the old plays of the French Theatre were ſcraps of ſacred hiſtory, and that the myſteries of our Saviour's paſſion in particular, were played in the moſt indecent manner. Meſſ. de Fontenelle and Parfait have ſupplyed us on that head with all the neceſſary details. The ſhocking abuſe of this kind of drama cauſed it to be aboliſhed. It cannot then come within M. Nicole's cenſure ſince it no longer exiſted; and the plays of his time had no manner of likeneſs to thoſe which I have juſt mentioned.

Next ſucceeded Comedy properly ſo called, but free, or rather licentious, ſuch as may be ſeen in the plays of Jodelle, Garnier, Hardy, and Rotrou. Let us attend to M. de Fontenelle. "Not the leaſt "ſcruple about manners, (ſays he) nor even de- "cency. Sometimes we find a courteſan in bed, "who by her diſcourſe keeps up her character "pretty well. Sometimes the heroine of the play "is violated, ſometimes a married woman gives a "rendezvous to her gallant. The firſt careſſes are "ſeen on the ſtage; and the ſpectators are deprived "of as little as poſſible of what paſſes between the "two Lovers." "*Theſe are certainly* (ſaid he a "little before) *ſtrange Morals. It does not appear "however, that anybody has been ſcandaliſed at "them.*" By the word *anybody*, we muſt underſtand the laity, the Court, the City; for the Church

continued ever to condemn Plays, and we cannot doubt but there remained ſome perſons of learning and piety who were ſenſible of the inconveniences reſulting from them. I own when Mr. Nicole wrote, that age of Comedy was ſcarce at an end; ſome traces of it were to be found in the firſt pieces of Corneille, and other authors often brought plays on the ſtage, which ſtood in great need of being refined. However, he might have already perceived the poſſibility of having a reformed ſtage, and been ſenſible that many of the pieces acted in his time, were written with a decency and regularity, which, carried on a few degrees further, might have tranſformed the Theatre into a ſchool for morals.

But here is a grand motive, which makes M Nicole talk in the ſtrain he does throughout his treatiſe; a motive that perplexes to this day all the writers of the Roman Communion, who have any regard for the principles of their Church. It is this contradiction, which nobody cares to be at the trouble of removing, by virtue of which every body frequents the Theatre without ſcruple, and deem that kind of paſtime one of the moſt lively and even one of the moſt innocent pleaſures of this life; whilſt the Actors and Actreſſes, loaded with anathemas, and deprived of Chriſtian burial, are at one and the ſame time, perſons adored and diſhonoured. All that can be ſaid on this matter, has been ſaid already, and therefor I have nothing to add to it. But it is not ſurpriſing that the Writer

of Port-Royal, who lived before the time of theſe diſcuſſions, ſcarce knew any thing of the Theatre, but by report, at a time when its reputation, (very bad before) was ſtill altogether equivocal; in ſhort who was wedded to a ſect of rigoriſts bordering on fanaticiſm; it is not ſurpriſing, I ſay, that M. Nicole, under theſe diſadvantages, ſhould have attempted to treat the partiſans of the ſtage as Sampſon treated the Philiſtines, by cruſhing them under the ruins of the Play-houſe. So far then I am not ſurpriſed at his zeal, but I wonder how that zeal ſhould produce an effect very common indeed in thoſe who carry this diſpoſition too far; and that is, to make him forget the rules of logic, and throw him into the moſt free aſſertions.

All he alleges to prove that Comedy is in its very nature a ſchool and exerciſe for vice, falls immediately to the ground on producing ſome dramatic pieces, which abſolutely combat vice, and concur, as one may ſay, with ſermons, towards the progreſs of virtue. Do not the Miſer, and the Tartuffe, tend to root up two of the moſt odious of vices? are not the Glorieux, and the Married Philoſopher, very proper to cure mankind of their moſt unreaſonable purſuits; but in M. Nicole's time, the ſubject of plays were nothing but intrigues borrowed for the moſt part from the Spaniſh Theatre; pieces of character are of later date; and thoſe that may be called ſentimental, the tender Comedy, are ſtill more recent. Had our moraliſt been preſent at the acting

of ſome pieces of Meſs. de la Chauſee and de Boiſſy, or the Cenia of Madam de Gratigny, I fancy he would have been, if not undeceived, at leaſt affected and ſtaggered. However to keep to the very pieces that he had in view, the intriguing plays, wherein every thing turns upon ſome fooliſh love affair traverſed by divers obſtacles, the unravelling of which is a marriage, it ſeems to me that he has carried matters too far: he makes, upon this, a ſally againſt love, which is really ſingular. "The paſſion of Love, (ſays he) is the ſtrongeſt impreſſion "that ſin has made on our ſouls: this is ſufficiently "evident by the horrible diſorders it produces in "the world; and nothing is more dangerous than "to excite it, to nouriſh it, and to deſtroy whatever curbs, and ſtops the progreſs of it. Now "what is moſt conducive to this end, is a certain "horror which cuſtom and a good education imprint, and nothing leſſens that horror more than "Comedy." Theſe are terrible words: but do they come out of the mouth of a Philoſopher, a divine too, who ſpeaks from ſolid principles and diſtinct notions: or muſt we not rather conſider them as eſcaped from a choleric anchoret, whoſe brain is in a ferment? what! is love, the inclination of one ſex towards the other, the effect and the conſequence of ſin? Adam in the ſtate of innocence, ſhould he not have loved his wife, likewiſe innocent? does a virtuous huſband ſin when he loves a wife that is not only virtuous, but lovely

and attracting? cannot a lover with lawful views feel a ſtrong paſſion for the object he addreſſes? the queſtion is not concerning either the extravagances or the crimes of love: we muſt conſider only the foundation of it, the eſſence and the determinations that reſult from it in every individual, in order to decide afterwards whether cuſtom and good education imprint a horror for love, whether it is proper to eradicate its principles from the heart, and whether, on the contrary, it would not be directly running counter to the views of nature and providence, to weaken only, ſo far from ſeeking to deſtroy, an impreſſion on which the preſervation of the ſpecies is entirely dependent, and one of the moſt lively and lawful pleaſures that can be taſted here below.

Though the laſt piece which M. de Voltaire brought on the ſtage (I wrote this in 1760) may poſſibly not be equal to thoſe he wrote in the vigour of his days, yet would I refer M. Nicole to it, were he ſtill living, that he might be convinced, that love may be propoſed to citizens who frequent the play houſe as a model moſt worthy of imitation. This piece is entitled *Tancred*; this *Tancred* is not the ſame as Taſſo's, he is a Sicilian Knight, a hero of the ſame ſtamp as the knights of old were. Amenaida, his ſpouſe, and the Heroine of the play, is virtue perſonified; with her, Love is a virtue, a duty. Honour, above all that delicate honour which takes offence at the want of eſteem, is the

motive of this heroine's courage; ſhe dares all dangers, to undeceive her Huſband, who ſuſpects her, and is at laſt overcome with joy at being juſtified in his ſight. Tancred, half dead, being ſatisfied of Amenaida's fidelity, expires on the ſpot; and Amenaida by the ſudden tranſition from the uneaſineſs of ſurviving him with a ſtain, to the pleaſure of being acknowleged faithful by him, and to the grief of ſeeing him expire, finds her ſpirits exhauſted by the conflict of theſe three paſſions; they abſorb her ſtrength, and ſhe breathes her laſt at Tancred's feet. Every body melts in tears, and the play ends. Can there be a finer example of conjugal fidelity, or a ſtronger leſſon for ſuſpicious huſbands who are ſwayed by jealouſy! what dangerous impreſſion can ſuch a ſight leave on the ſpectators! the mind is inſtructed by it, and the heart is affected, and if the ſenſes are pleaſed, what precept forbids the enjoyment of ſimilar pleaſures? may it not even be urged that the better we reliſh them, the more ſhall we be out of conceit with groſs, brutiſh, and diſhonourable pleaſures? let us continue to follow our moraliſt. Suppoſing even that theatrical pieces ſhould have no other object but marriage, and nothing were to be repreſented but lawful paſſions, that does not ſatisfy him, *beeauſe*, he expreſsly ſaid, *though marriage makes a right uſe of concupiſcence, the latter is nevertheleſs ever evil and unruly; and we are not allowed to excite it, either in ourſelves or others.* I have endeavoured to come at the ſenſe of theſe

words, and cannot find any in them, at leaſt that is rational. In order to marry, according to the impulſe of nature, (for I am not ſpeaking of marriages contracted from intereſt, policy, etc.) the parties muſt love one another, muſt deſire and wiſh to be united really and naturally to each other. Without this deſire, and even were it not very violent, the world would be at an end. There are ſo many inconveniences inſeparable from the married ſtate, it is ſo heavy a yoke, a path ſo thick ſet with thorns, even for the happieſt couples, that nobody would venture upon it, if the moſt powerful of all attractives did not ſollicit and invincibly determine us thereto. Is this what M. Nicole calls concupiſcence, and has he any grounds for ſaying that it is *in itſelf ever evil and irregular?* the direct contrary ought to be aſſerted. In *itſelf* it is always good and orderly, as are all the paſſions, all inclinations, all natural inſtincts; but it may become, like all other paſſions, a violent and diſorderly ſtate, a delirium, a madneſs. Then the buſineſs will be to decide, whether the Theatre really inflames it, and cauſes it to exceed its proper bounds. This has, certainly, never happened to thoſe who were preſent at the acting of Polyeucte, Cinna, Andromache and Britannicus, nor at that of the Miſanthrope, the Learned Women, and other good comic pieces which have appeared ſince Moliere. Tragedy affects us, Comedy diverts us; every one retires well pleaſed with the performance;

and if they retain ſome of the ſtriking paſſages, theſe, generally ſpeaking, do not contain the leaſt ſeed of corruption. I ſay generally ſpeaking, for I do not pretend to vindicate without exception every thing ſpoken on the ſtage. That is not poſſible, neither is it neceſſary. If people muſt abſtain from every thing, not entirely exempt from fault or danger, they muſt ſequeſter themſelves from ſociety, have no ſhare in converſation, read no works of taſte or amuſement; for ſtrictures and maxims, that are hurtful, ſlip in every where, or they may become ſo to thoſe who make an ill uſe of them. But I will be bold to ſay, that there is leſs danger in ſeeing, for the ſpace of two or three hours, a fine and good theatrical piece acted, than in ſpending the ſame time in three fourths of the common companies, or in reading the greater part of the beſt written and moſt eſteemed books. I know very well that one might avoid all theſe dangers, by taking ſanctuary in ſuch a retirement as that of the Meſſ. of Port-Royal, or by turning Carthuſian. But is that the vocation for a rational man? is it even that of a Chriſtian the moſt attached to his religion? this is what all the Nicoles in the world will never be able to prove.

Even ſome doctors of his own communion before the end of the laſt century, held a quite different language from his, and which agrees with ours. I find in the *Hiſtory of the works of the Learned*, for the month of December 1695. by M.

Baſnage de Baural, an extract of a *letter from a divine, conſulted in order to know, whether Comedy may be allowed, or whether it ought to be abſolutely prohibited.* This letter, containing 70 pages in duodecimo, was printed at Paris by Guignard. The author, after ſeveral very judicious reflections, ſays that we ſhould always diſtinguiſh the merit of things corrupted, from the wickedneſs of thoſe who corrupt them: the abuſe which mankind make of ſo many objects not being a ſufficient reaſon for condemning them. "Society, continues he, the commerce of the world, afford many more opportunities to hearts ſo ready to become enflamed, and ſo ſuſceptible of paſſion, than the ſight of a Comedy. It is there that virtue meets with ſo many rocks and is ſo often ſhipwrecked. Muſt we for that baniſh ourſelves from the world, to attend ſolely to our ſalvation, and to avoid being diverted by ſo many objects ſo capable of ſeducing us? hence it would follow that a woman, becauſe ſhe is beautiful, is obliged in conſcience to hid herſelf, leaſt ſhe ſhould kindle criminal deſires; or ſhe muſt be ſequeſtered from the ſight of men for the welfare of mankind, ſo that ſhe may not become a fatal object of temptation: muſt we, ſaid Licurgus, root up our vines, on account of the intemperance of drunkards? it is not then reaſonable to aboliſh Comedy, nor to deprive ourſelves of a decent diverſion, under pretence that perſons who are weak, or perhaps al-

" ready grown effeminate by voluptuouſneſs, may " make a bad uſe of it. We are not obliged to re- " trench, for their ſake, the moſt agreeable amuſe- " ment of men of ſenſe, nor to aboliſh what is in- " genious and inſtructive in Comedy, in favour of " ill-diſpoſed minds, who ſeek therein pretences to " palliate their irregularities. The human mind " having need of relaxation (*arcum non ſemper ten-* " *dit Apollo,*) and recover new ſtrength by repoſe, " Comedy is a lawful and allowable pleaſure." Thus thought and expreſſed himſelf a divine, whoſe name I know not, and who certainly has not been held in ſo high repute as M. Nicole, though he was ſuperior to him, at leaſt if one may judge by their arguments on the ſubject in queſtion.

The ſame queſtion was debated ſome time afterwards in England. The two champions were Meſſ. Collier and Dennis*. The firſt may be called a furious adverſary againſt the theatre: it is true he has a ſpite to the Engliſh ſtage, where there are in fact irregularities and indecencies which cannot be juſtified. Mr. Dennis anſwers as well as he can, and offers at leaſt ſome good arguments to prove the poſſibility and utility of having decent plays.

Let us return to the treatiſe under examination. What follows is ſtill more extraordinary; one can hardly, while reading it, believe one's own eyes. Comedy is a damnable diverſion, becauſe it anni-

* See Extracts from their Writings, in the *Hiſtory of the Works of the Learned*, tom. XIV. p. 215, and 293.

hilates the duty of Chriſtian watchfulneſs, and no perſon has ever thought proper to prepare himſelf for it by prayer. *Riſum teneatis?* what, are all diverſions prohibited, becauſe one cannot begin and end them with a prayer? This reminds me of thoſe ridiculous queſtions, which I dare not quote but in Latin, *Num inter naturalis debiti et conjugatis officii egeriem liceat pſallere, orare*, etc. Let us anſwer ſeriouſly however. 1ſt. The life of a righteous man is a continual prayer, and even the only one that is acceptable to the ſupreme Being. That of a Chriſtian is conformable to the Apoſtolic precept: *Whether ye eat, whether ye drink, whatſoever ye do, let it be for the glory of God.* 2d. Why ſhould it be deemed a greater evil to go to a play, without having previouſly prayed, than to amuſe one's ſelf at tennis, billiards, or any other recreation, which is not uſually preceded by an invocatory act? 3d. Why, if we have a mind, might we not put up a prayer, before going to the play, as well as on ſitting down to table. The intention would be pretty much the ſame, we ſhould give thanks to God for his gifts, for the pleaſures he beſtows on us; and beg of him to preſerve us from all abuſe, and all exceſs. 4th, In fine, either Chriſtian watchfulneſs reſembles the practice of thoſe Orientals, who occupy themſelves with looking conſtantly on the tip of their noſe, and who are in deſpair when they are made to loſe ſight of it: or elſe it allows all decent recreations, proportionably to the occaſion

we may have for them. The whole muſt then center in the firſt and only query: whether it is unſeemly, or criminal to frequent the theatre? or ſtill more preciſely, whether Tragedy or Comedy are hurtful and dangerous repreſentations? Now this laſt aſſertion we deny, under the reſtrictions already indicated, *i. e.* Such pieces, as Morality and Religion agree in condemning, ſhould for ever baniſhed from the ſtage.

I look upon the argument which M. Nicole builds upon, as mere ſophiſtry. "If perſons who live in retirement and remote from the world, meet never-"theleſs with great obſtacles in leading a Chriſtian "life, even in the very center of monaſteries; how "many wounds and falls may they be liable to, "who, leading a life altogether ſenſual, expoſe "themſelves to temptations, which the moſt mag-"nanimous could not be able to reſiſt!" There is ſcarce a word here, that may not be cenſured. Hermits when thinking to fly from temptations, in ſome meaſure draw them on themſelves and render them inſupportable. Man is never in worſe company than alone, when he ſurrenders himſelf to a forced retirement, for which nature has not formed him, nor religion required of him as a duty. As it has been ſaid that chagrin got up behind, and galloped away with the man that wanted to fly from himſelf, one may ſay likewiſe that all the vicious inclinations, all the agitations of the fleſh and of the ſenſual appetites, awaken with more vigour in thoſe

who have broke off all commerce with the world, than in thoſe who live in the midſt of it, who employ themſelves uſefully, and amuſe themſelves decently. To be convinced of this, there needs no more than to read in the lives of ſome pious Hermits, what ſtrange remedies they had recourſe to, in order to extinguiſh a fire that conſumed them to the very bones. As to monaſteries, they never were the abode of tranquillity, of diſengagement from the world, and of ſublime virtue. There, all is intrigue, cabal, hatred, envy, and diſunion: every vice of the mind bears ſway there, and thoſe of the fleſh are far from being baniſhed thence. M. Nicole is then much miſtaken if he thinks to avail himſelf here of the argument *a majori ad minus*, and to have a right to ſay: If hermits and monks find ſo much difficulty in working out their ſalvation, how are they to be ſaved that go to the play? I ſhall not heſitate to ſay, they may be ſaved more eaſily; that a Magiſtrate who ſhall have adminiſtered juſtice impartially; a man of letters who ſhall have made uſeful ſtudies in his cloſet; and every man who ſhall have fulfilled the duties of his ſtation during eight or ten hours in the day, will be better prepared for ſalvation, after he ſhall have ſpent two hours at the play, than a prior, who, after having ſung matins, veſpers and complines, ſhall quarrel with his monks, or than monks who ſhall provoke their prior. This is really to underſtand neither the world, nor religion; it is merely viewing objects

through a dormer-window, or from underneath a monk's cowl, to judge and argue as our author does here. The other part of his argument is altogether as falſe. Going to the play, according to his notion, is leading a ſenſual life, and expoſing ones ſelf to the ſtrongeſt temptations. This is begging the queſtion, and therefor requires no anſwer. Mankind muſt have ſome recreation; but I am not making here an apology for idlers and people who make it their buſineſs to run after plays; I ſpeak of the laborious man, who is uſeful to ſociety; he requires ſome relaxation, I believe nobody will diſpute that with me; and therefor I ſay we may venture a wager that the moſt innocent and moſt uſeful diverſion he can take, is that of ſeeing a decent play, and that ſuch a ſpectacle is not a chimera really exiſting

This being granted, Mr. Nicole may go on at his leiſure, and add, "That Comedy is a temptation "ſought after on purpoſe; that there is raſh-"neſs, pride, and impiety, in believing ourſelves "able to reſiſt, without grace, the temptations we "meet with in Comedy; that there is preſump-"tion and madneſs in ſuppoſing that God will al-"ways deliver us through his grace, from a danger "to which we expoſe ourſelves voluntarily and "without neceſſity." This heap of words and exaggerations ſtill contain the ſame ideas, that is to ſay, the moſt free ſuppoſitions.

Let us not, however, imagine that our moraliſt's

reſources are exhauſted; he calls to his help a very powerful one, that is the devil. Men have ever been fond of making him intervene in the affairs of this world; and as the phraſe is, *Deus ex machina*, one might ſay on an infinite number of occaſions where a diabolical action is brought in a play, *Diabolus ex machina*. I do not pretend to conteſt, either the exiſtence of that evil ſpirit, or the operations which the ſcripture attributes to him. But we live in too enlightened an age to be ſcrupulous of ſaying that the devil does not concern himſelf more with every thing that is daily imputed to him, than he concerned himſelf about the poſſeſſion of the Nuns of Loudun. Suppoſe even he were let looſe, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, and had power to tyrannize at will over mankind, I do not believe that he would amuſe himſelf with ſuch fooleries as has been attributed to him by the authors of *Demonomanias*, among others that of *Macon*, a little book formerly very much in vogue, and which contains a recital of the waggiſh tricks the devil played in the houſe of an old miniſter in that city, whoſe name was Perrault. It was ſuſpected with good reaſon that this was a plot or intrigue of a valet and a ſervant maid, who wanted to drive away their maſter that they might have elbow room. And ſuch like tricks have always been the unravelling of every ſcene of this nature, when pains have been taken to dive into them. Examples of

this may be ſeen in a romance extremely well written, entitled, *The falſe Clelia.*

But this is a ſort of digreſſion: the queſtion is what ſhare the devil has in public ſhews? the ancient Fathers of the Church have made him intervene therein, eſpecially in the public dances, and have ſaid, that it was he that moved the feet of the dancers of both ſexes; this takes in that firſt æra of public ſhews, of which I have ſpoken, when they were yet tainted with the idolatry and corruption of manners which abounded among the Pagans. If men will call every thing diabolical, which tends to deprive mankind, becauſe it agrees with the devil's views, who is the firſt of all ſeducers, I will grant that the Fathers were in the right to make uſe of the ſtrongeſt motives in order to perſuade Chriſtians to preſerve themſelves from that contagion. Let any one read the account of the Feſtivals of Daphne, which were celebrated in her grove near Antioch, and he will ſee they were worthy of the worſhippers and ſlaves of the devil. But that is very far from the preſent ſtate of public diverſions; and it would be as difficult to prove by fact as by law, that the devil preſides or ought to preſide at the acting of the plays that we have indicated, and ſuch as are ſimilar to them. He certainly would not find his account in that of Tartuffe: it is his intereſt that men ſhould be falſe, and deceitful: to unmaſk, and confound hypocriſy, is to deſtroy his reign. Thus, without making a com-

pariſon between Comedy and the Goſpel, it would be nevertheleſs true that it would be in the ſame caſe, that is to ſay, that if we attribute it to Satan, he muſt have been againſt himſelf. We may then look upon as mere declamations, what Mr. Nicole ſays, That Comedy deſtroys the ramparts which fenced the avenues of our ſouls from the devil, and that he may then enter eaſily therein; and ſuppoſing even that the ſight of a Comedy ſhould not immediately excite evil thoughts in us, the devil knows how to take his time, when he finds a favourable opportunity, to make the imperceptible ſeeds which it had ſown in our hearts, to ſhoot up and bring forth the fruits of death.

The remainder of our moraliſt's treatiſe is equally wrong. He propoſes to himſelf to prove that it is impoſſible to love God, to lead a Chriſtian life, to attend to the duty of prayer, to render to Jeſus Chriſt what we owe to him, whilſt we frequent the Theatre. Let any one judge of his enthuſiaſm on this matter by the following paſſage: "Would it "not be mocking God and Man, to ſay that we go "to the play for Chriſt's ſake? would we dare to "offer him ſuch an action, and ſay to him: Lord, "it is in obedience to thee that I am going to "the play; thy ſpirit ſhall conduct me thither; "thyſelf ſhall be the motive of this action; it is by "thy croſs that thou haſt purchaſed it for me? is "there any body blind, or hardened enough to "bear without horror the impiety of this language?"

It is perhaps carrying things too far, thus to confound the greateſt objects, the moſt auguſt myſteries of religion with diſcuſſions of this nature. But, ſince Mr. Nicole compels us to it, let us anſwer him, that what he looks upon as the height of impiety, is none at all; and though no body holds ſuch language as he would fain put in the mouth of the partiſans of the ſtage, to make a contraſt with their conduct, that contraſt would not be real. A good Chriſtian, as we have intimated already, who cloſes the day with a prayer, gives God thanks for having preſerved him, for having given him a competency, and having joined it with ſome pleaſure, which is not leſs an effect of the goodneſs of the ſupreme Being. If therefor, after having been that day at the play, where he enjoyed a harmleſs pleaſure, of which he did not receive the leaſt impreſſion of a vicious kind (which is not begging the queſtion, like all Mr. Nicole's theſes, but a fact grounded on experience) if, I ſay, he gives thanks to God for favours beſtowed on him that day, that one is included implicitely; and I dare ſay it might be ſo, explicitely, without the leaſt profanation.

One of the moſt intereſting diſcuſſions contained yet in this treatiſe, is that concerning many worldly maxims of falſe honour, of vain-glory, of revenge, which, being pompouſly delivered on the ſtage, are adopted by the audience, and have an influence on their conduct. Mr. Nicole quotes ſome examples of this, taken from the *Cid* and the *Horatii*, which were

the fineſt pieces of his time, and are ſtill in great eſteem. I anſwer in two words, that thoſe maxims have not produced the effects attributed to them, but on the contrary, as ſoon as the *Cid*, for example, appeared, all with one common voice blamed the indecency of Chimene's paſſion for the murderer of her father; and the idea of her marriage with him, notwithſtanding that the poet had referred it to a more diſtant time, appeared quite ſhocking. It is the ſame with regard to the Roman greatneſs, ſo overſtrained and ſavage, that this admirable poet knew how to expreſs ſo nobly; he who was more a Roman than the Romans themſelves. We were aſtoniſhed and delighted, but not the leſs ſenſible of the falſe, and even the vicious. The example of Horatius who kills his ſiſter becauſe ſhe expreſſes too much affection for the memory of an object worthy of her love, will never create the like ſentiments, nor be productive of ſimilar actions. I ſay, in the ſecond place, that the Theatre is altered in this reſpect ſince Corneille; that Racine, Crebillion, Voltaire, and the other great poets who have ſince reigned on the ſtage, have ſpoken, as I may ſay, a more human language, ſo that the ſtriking ſentences in their pieces are, for the moſt part, true maxims, conformable to the principles of the ſoundeſt morality. In ſhort, I obſerve that the heroes, the theatrical perſonages, being men, and obliged to reſemble men, if we expect that repreſentations ſhould appear probable and be inſtruc-

tive, thoſe heroes, thoſe perſonages muſt have faults, and their diſcourſe muſt bear the ſtamp of them; yet this does not render thoſe ſpeeches dangerous. What can be finer in the dramatic kind, than the Phedra of Racine: and yet what is there more deteſtable, more odious, than the deſigns of Phedra, her machinations, and eſpecially the counſels of her confidant Oenona? Will it be ſaid, that the ſight or peruſal of that piece will produce *Phedraſes* and *Oenonaſes?* this would be the height of abſurdity. The ſcripture itſelf, in propoſing to us the fineſt examples, and the moſt worthy of our imitation, makes no difficulty to let us not only perceive the traces of human imperfection, but the ſtains of the moſt enormous vices David raviſhing Bathſebah, and putting to death Uriah, is he not as criminal as Phedra inflamed with love for Hyppolytus, and cauſing his deſtruction?

I might ſtop here, becauſe it ſeems to me that with the help of the principles I have juſt laid down, there remain no objections againſt plays to which we may not give a ſatisfactory anſwer. But in order that the conſequence of theſe principles be not extended beyond my deſign, I declare, firſt, That by Spectacles or Shews, I meant only in this tract, Tragedy and Comedy: ſecondly, That my apology takes in only the Tragedies and Comedies in which the laws of decency are ſtrictly obſerved: thirdly, That I do not approve the frequenting of the theatre, when it becomes a paſſion and a buſineſs,

but I look upon it as lawful on the footing of an innocent recreation; adding even this counſel, to abſtain from this recreation, if we find that it renders us paſſionately fond of Shews, juſt as we muſt renounce gaming, if we feel an inclination to become gameſters: fourthly, In fine, in the moſt decent pieces, there may be, without doubt, ſome alterations and amendments ſtill wanting, and it were to be wiſhed, they were made, and the views of Mr. Riccobini for the reformation of the Stage were followed and brought to perfection, and ſome learned critics conſtantly commiſſioned to watch as well over the pieces cenſured, as thoſe brought on the Stage, which would put the finiſhing hand to rendering this pleaſure as pure as it may and ought to be. After theſe explanations, I do not believe any perſon can cenſure me, either on the choice of this ſubject, or the manner in which I have handled it.

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THE END.